7

modern music on cue

issue no. 24

sixpence

The Sound Of Success

chasing furies

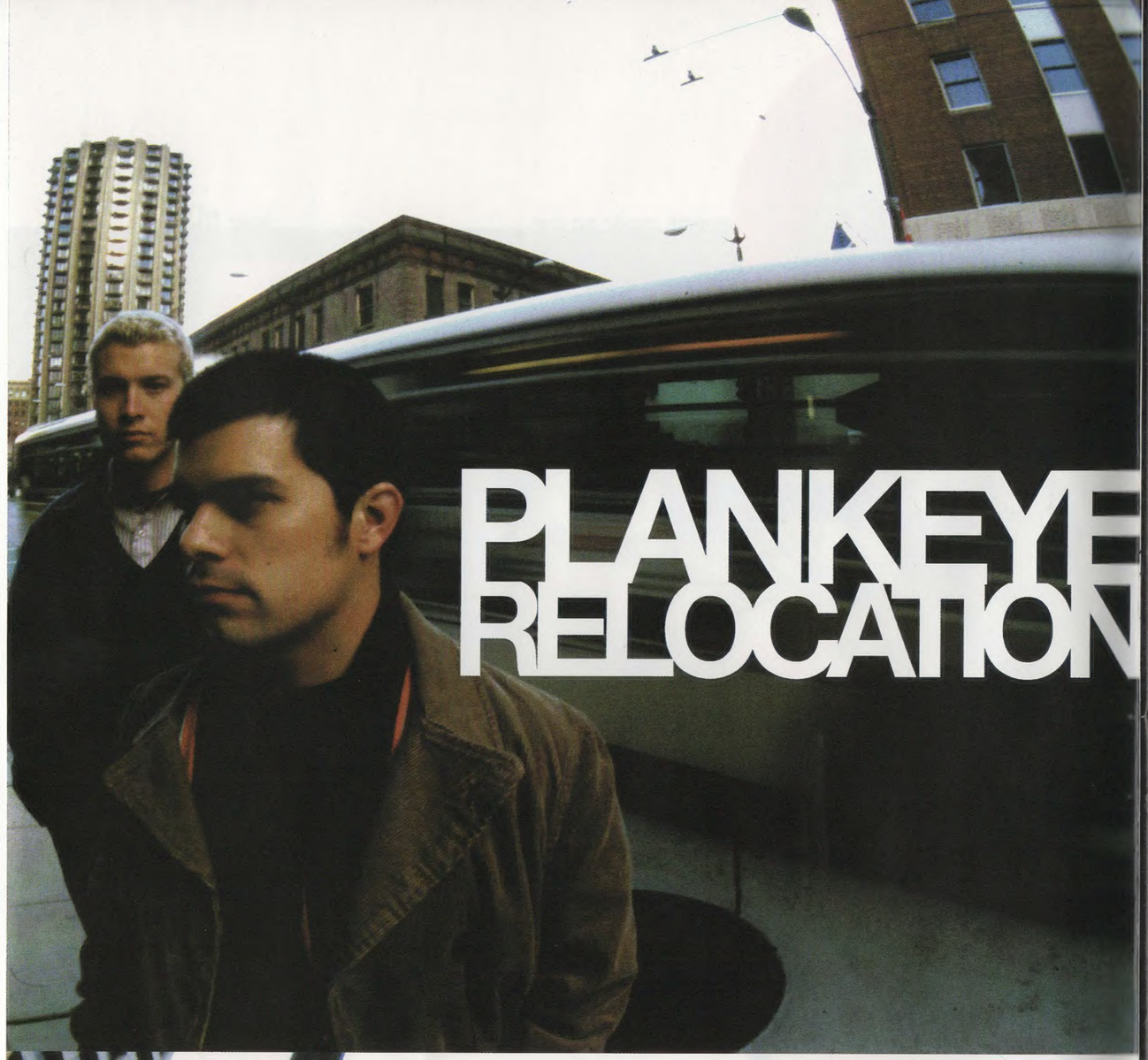
festival preview

switchfoot

6 best baked potato toppings

L.A. Symphony

www.7ball.com



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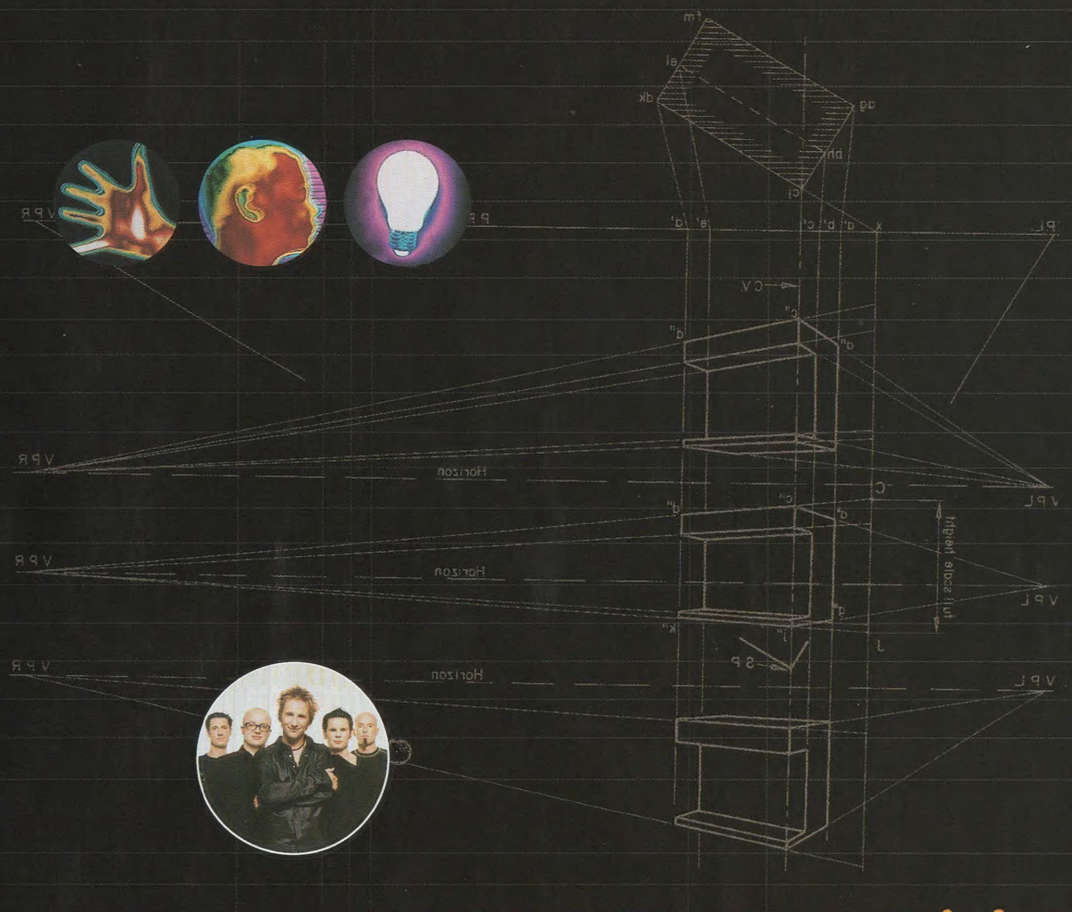

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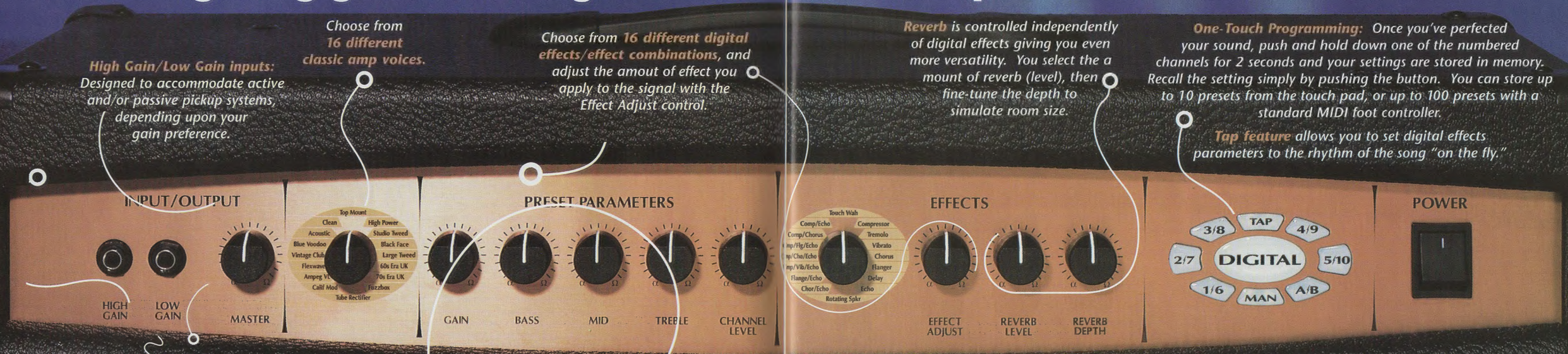

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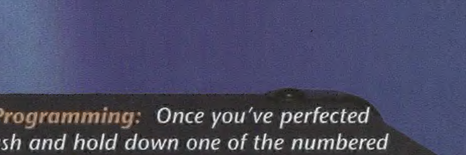

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Next Issue: 7ball *Light: Everything you love about* 7ball*, and much less.*
Including: —3 bands we wish would break up —Why Christian music should cost more
—Illegal immigrants: The backbone of a healthy economy

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Mail

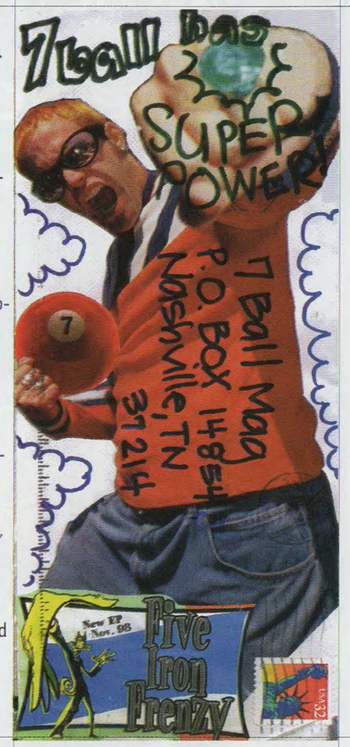
Loving Hate Mail

Our work here is done. The spoons will leave you alone now.

I never knew there were Christian magazines I would **actually like.** Do you guys have merchandise (shirts, stickers)?
Marisol Sepulveda
Sun Valley, CA

We have both—just email subscriptions@7ball.com to get yours today! We may soon be adding a 7ball patch (for those addicted to sarcastic shenanigans), I Can't Believe It's Not 7ball (for those who will not tolerate lactose), a three-door coupe, and the 7ball You've Got Some Cheese On Your Face 2000, a device that helps you give a curiously strong hint.

I really think you guys should put posters in your magazine. Maybe just a **centerfold picture** of a band or something.
Jonathan Ryder
Sunbury, OH



Submit your photo to: 7ball Centerfold, 2525-C Lebanon Pike, Box 6, Nashville, TN 37214.

We went to Ghana on a missions trip with Teen Mania Ministries for two months, and while we were there God moved, man. We saw over 20,000 people saved—it was incredible. And, of course, we had *7ball* with us the whole time. *7ball* rocks. When I have kids I'm going to make one of them marry a *7ball* person so I can claim a part of your greatness. You guys are **cooler than eating Twinkies** and watching *Wheel Of Fortune*!
Jeremiah Wentz
via the Internet

As much as I love the music on the *Gas* CDs, what's up with the lack of creativity in the CD covers? I mean, really—the lava lamp and bowling ones were all so classic. **What happened?** How about a contest for theme ideas if you've already run dry?
Jeannie Rose Field
Cannon Beach, OR

Way to go—our art director just read your message and burst into a deluge of tears. And we can't get him to stop. I think you should call him at (615) 872-8080, ext. 3325 to apologize. Or to offer suggestions.

I would love to see **more techno/ambient bands** in your magazine. I love Virus, Cloud2Ground and hydro and would love to hear of others.
Megan Marker
Brookville, OH

We would love to see more rubber bands. For our large ball of rubber bands.

I wanted to tell you *7ball* is the absolute best magazine. I **love the graphics** and layout. Someday when I graduate, Lord willing, I can be part of the *7ball* staff. That would be the super coolest job in the world.
Melissa Patton
Hornell, NY

It's cool only when the beatings subside.

I wanted to know if I could get the first two ***Gas Collection*** CDs. I've got from No. 3 on, but it just doesn't feel right not having them all.
Jonathan Grubbs
Wilmington, NC

We can imagine how that must feel. You can get back issues and CDs by emailing subscriptions@7ball.com.

I had a limited view of Christian music until I found your publication. It's just good to **know about more music** groups and find the ones I love.
Daniel Powers
Bodfish, CA

We had a limited view of the elusive shopping cart, but then we just had pancakes. Viva Don Knotts!

Show **more rap groups.** I love rap but never know what rap albums are out.
Mark McChargue
Schriever, LA

For you and you alone we have added a hip-hop part to the news section. Okay, it's really because we like rap but, hey, we wanted to make you feel good.

I just wanted to tell you how cool I think your magazine is and thank you for your comparisons to **secular music**. For those of us who are new to the scene, it's very helpful to have a guide of some sort.
Rikki Bell
New Jersey

Your magazine rocks. It's great to have something to read that's pure, but not religious. It's hard for me to find Christian music that I like since my friends and I usually listen to secular rock. Since I've never heard most of the bands, it would help if you could put **more secular music** comparisons in your reviews.
Ciera Lembice
Vancouver, WA

Yes, we find lines of hamsters dancing to musical accompaniment strangely mesmerizing.

It's so great to know there are wonderful music groups to make up for the **really horrible** ones I can't stand. It's great to know there is a staff that cares enough to print the stuff. Thank you.
Amanda
via the Internet

I just picked up your issue No. 22 and I can't tell you how disappointed I am in with your magazine. I'm glad you support Christian bands, but after reading your letter section I must say that **you guys are a bunch of morons**. You don't have to answer every letter with a smart [expletive deleted] reply. I don't know if you think that is cool or what, but I can tell you it is the most idiotic thing I have ever read. I will never pick up your magazine again, and I will let others know what I think about it.
Jeff Jameson
via the Internet

PEN PALS:

Brandi Phillips
18, Female
3416 S. 117th E. Ave.
Tulsa, OK 74146
Bands: Waterdeep, The W's, Shadow Walk
Festival: Tom Fest

Chad Bainbridge
25, Male
4570 S. Calhoun Rd.
New Berlin, WI 53151
CoolSkaDaddyO@hotmail.com
Bands: P.O.D., Starflyer 59, all ska

Alan Squad
18, Male
7355 Bennett St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15208
asquad@juno.com
www.delphi.com/bsquad
Bands: Ghoti Hook, Project 86, B-squad
Festival: Creation

Chad Bowie
18, Male
2796 Evans Cr. SW
Shallotte, NC 28470
chad117@hotmail.com
Bands: Project 86, Unashamed, Fogel

We think your letter's really [compliment deleted].

My favorite thing to do is read the letters from the subscribers because I think the **editor is hilarious**. Those people who get all mad at the editor because he is "rude" obviously have no sense of humor at all. I really love the magazine because it promotes new bands. If I didn't get *7ball*, I wouldn't be listening to half the bands I do. Thanks for continuing to give me awesome CDs and a great mag to read. See you at Creation '98!
Alina Kline
Dover, PA

Do you really need to publish the **bitter twisted letters** that unhappy people send you? If they really don't like *7ball*, why do they buy it—much less, read it? Personally, I like the magazine, although I have only read one issue. Keep up the good work.
Rachel
via the Internet

We like Pop Tarts. They are guaranteed to make your mouth water, even though they can also be used as an incendiary device.

Play your song for me. Duben. We think you're hilarious, and when I grow up I want to be just like you. I'm even practicing ripping on people. The other day at school this kid tripped in front of me and I made fun of him and he said, *Hey, you sound just like the guy who answers letters at* 7ball. And I said *Noice!* The only reason I get your magazine is for the letter part. Just kidding, I guess the other stuff is cool, too. So **when you die can we have your job?** By the way, have you heard of that new band "Refusal To Do A Work Stoppage"? They are smoothage in the making.
Jesse, Allie, Jenny and Katy
via the Internet

Who ARE You People??

We get a lot of letters asking what's wrong with us.

What we are:	*What we are not:*
People	Newsweek
Jokesters	Funny
All thumbs	All-for-one
Into good music	Into vandalism
God-loving	Cod-loving

Ain't nobody gonna flow a better liture din you. Sum say what say? Your* mailitudinal correspondage *an I do the samo samo. But—knock yosef a pro slick. Grammata back. Gutenberg.

You guys are weird. I'm glad I have a subscription, I think.
Dane
via the Internet

You think you have a subscription?

To whomever writes the comments, you are hilarious. So often sarcasm is looked down upon in Christian circles; it is so refreshing to see someone make **honest comments** back to people who write **silly things.** I am the administrator for an online newsletter for dc Talk fans, and I use those brackets whenever the heck I want. I laughed out loud at your random definitions (especially the comment, *no one likes injections very much*).
Jess
via the Internet

If there was a hypothetical duel between talented wrestling enthusiasts, one being flea-bitten and the other loving water floaties, who would win? You'd say the flea-bitten one, wouldn't you? You'd be wrong though; it's the one with floaties.

I think your magazine is the best. I have really been able to witness to my friends at school through it. Could you please do an issue featuring **ska bands?** Please!
Joshua Kulak
via the Internet

I love you guys and everything, but I have a suggestion. Do you think you could cover some hardcore, metal or electronica bands? (And is Stavesacre gonna make another album soon or what?) All I'm seeing are the same bands on the cover alternating every two months. Ska is great and everything, but please, for those of us who are die-hard **hardcore and metal fans** (like myself), could you please fulfill this one request?
Jennifer
via the Internet

But everyone likes guacamole dip.

I would just like to know why people think it's a disgrace to Christianity for "Christian bands" to get air time on "secular" radio stations, or **play in mainstream clubs & bars?** If we Christians don't preach the Gospel to the unsaved, then how will they hear? Why do people that are already born-again need to have the Gospel preached to them over and over again? Is it the healed that need a physician or the sick?

PENPALS

Amanda Behrens
18, Female
1825 S. 17 St.
Sheboygan, WI
53081-5632
starshyn@juno.com
Bands: Third Day, Delirious, Shaded Red
Festival: Called to Be, Atlanta

Jon Rector
18, Male
P.O. Box 669
Belle, MO 65013
wonderjon@hotmail.com
Bands: MxPx, FIF, dc Talk

Travis Aker
23, Male
2488 St. Rt. 343
Yellow Springs,OH 45387
meatmo@juno.com
Bands: Galactic Cowboys, King's X, MxPx

Dannell Ladd
21, Female
P.O. Box 366
Newark, TX 76071
dmlsmile@hotmail.com
www.mungleshow.com
Bands: Between Thieves, FIF, ASU

Lydia Karstedt
via the Internet

A friend of mine purchased a year's subscription from *7ball* at Creation Festival this past summer and gave me the issues along with the CDs. Those CDs turned me on to no less than 20 new groups and artists I may have never given a chance. I intend to start my own subscription within the month (just waiting for overtime at work so my wife is OK with the spending). Along with that, I was hoping to purchase **back issues. Can I?**
Jym Hopper
via the Internet

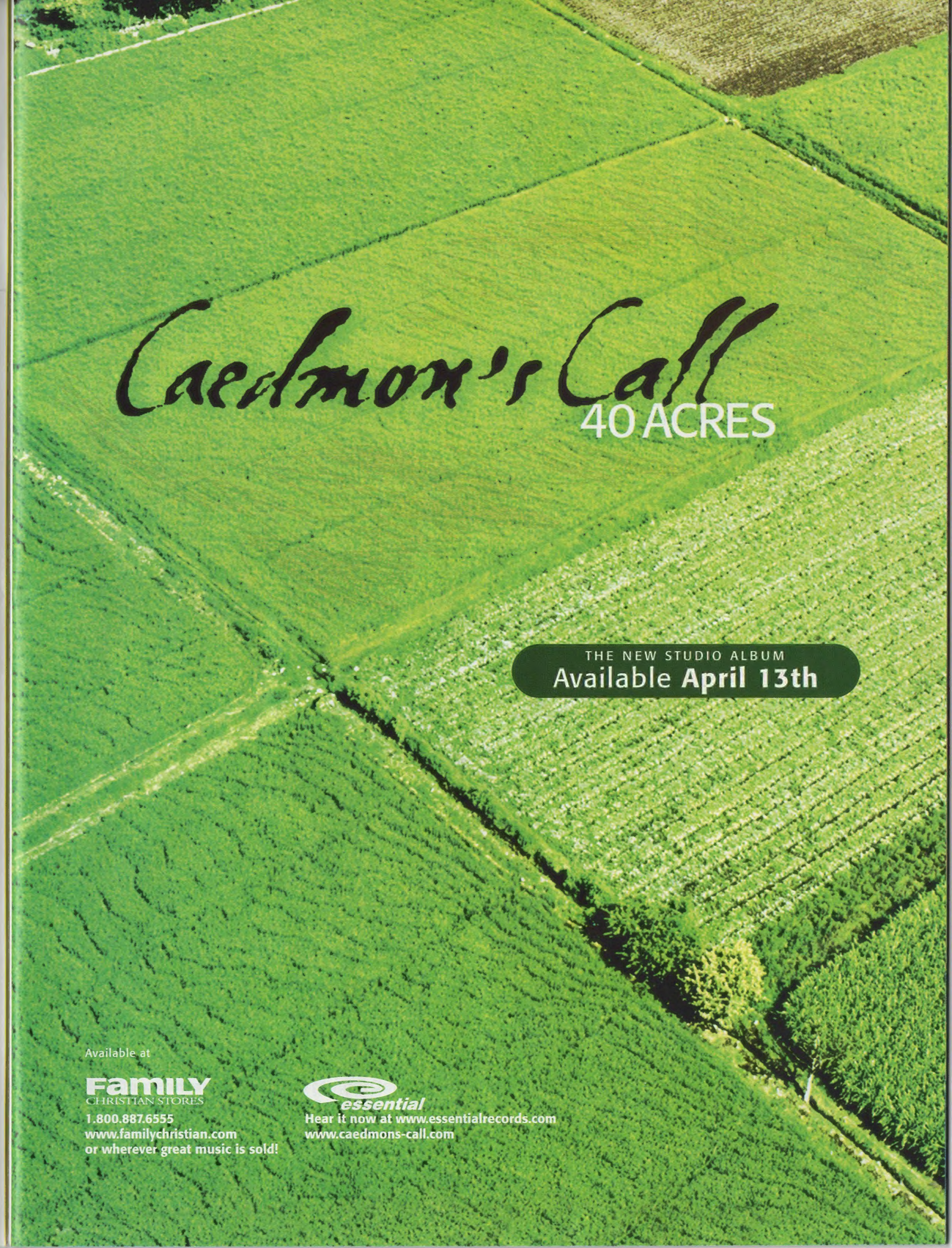
You can find out what's left in the shed by emailing subscriptions@7ball.com.

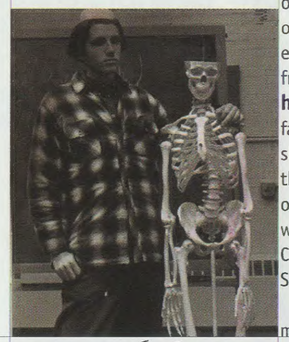
I'm getting sick of **"so called"** Christian bands that don't sing anything that has to do with God. What does a band have to do to get their music sold at a Christian bookstore? Just call themselves Christian? It kind of seems like they're tricking us to buy their music. I like to listen to real God-serving musicians who are not afraid to sing about what they stand for. By the way, this is not meant to put your magazine down in any way; I think you guys are great.
Rachel Hansen
via the Internet

But do you have the power to stare back ... and NOT BLINK?

I just love *7ball*! I was getting some other Christian music mag but they were **so lame.** You guys do a great job. I love the **humor** that's put into it and you all sound like you have fun putting it together. Keep up the good work!
Jessi Harr
via the Internet

Well, everyone's got an embarrassing sour cream & chive story.





7ball Classic

7ball looks back at one of our favorite letters ... from page 8.

I never knew there were Christian magazines I would actually like. Do you guys have merchandise (shirts, stickers)?
Marisol Sepulveda
Sun Valley, CA

7ball crew and janitors, first I want to give you the whole "great mag, keep up the good work" thing: "Great mag, keep up the good work." That out of the way, I have a simple request. I feel like one of those freaks who writes *Parade* magazine every Sunday asking about Brad Pitt and that chick from *Party of Five* every week: **"Does Brad Pitt have a girlfriend?"** and "*Party of Five* is my favorite show, can you tell me how many pairs of shoes does (insert what's-her-name) own?" Most of these letters no doubt come from state institutions of one form or another, and all from men, too, I would think. But now I join their ranks to ask this: Can I get an email address for Kim Hoskins of Pep Squad?

Anyway, the duck I keep in my room is begging me to let him check his email, so I must be going. Keep up the work, Lord knows you need to feed your families.

Jeremy T. Hohn
via the Internet

No. And if you ask again, we'll alert your warden.

For starters, let me say that I love your mag. Also (let me be the 124,138,117th person to say this), I think you should go monthly. Do you guys screen the bands you write about in any way, or do you just take them at their word that they in fact are really Christians, write about them and let us make our own determination? **Just curious.**

Josh Knapp
Warren, MI

Well, we did an extensive background check on your sister, Jennifer. She's clean.

I have a problem: My cat vomits on some of your articles. Some of them are still readable afterwards, but only through gas masks. Do you know of anything that will get the **smell of cat vomit** out of your magazine?

Good mag. People always tell you how horrible it is, but I think they're just trying to conform your mag. It is what it is, and if people don't like it, they should find another one. Salami!

Brandon Gregory
via the Internet

If clowns scare you, or you just plain hate them, this magazine's for you.

I love *7ball*—it's the coolest—but one thing I really don't like is the responses to the letters that kids write in. I think it's **really negative** and rude and really, really stupid for you to degrade people who write you letters of praise about your magazine. Get with it.

Kate Parker
Fayetteville, AR

PENPALS

Nate Dickerson
18, Male
12207 Cardston Court
Tomball, TX 77375
fistvstact@hotmail.com
Bands: MxPx, One-21, Maintenance Man
Fave Festival: TomFest

Brian Norris
18, Male
xword777@yahoo.com
Bands: Newsboys, Bleach, Ghoti Hook

Hannah Lothe
18, Female
11823 211th Ave. E
Sumner, WA 98390
alizeron@aol.com
Bands: Undercover, Altar Boys

Correction:
Shannon Hennebry
2802 Evergreen Rd.
Fargo, ND 58102

We are never mean to people who praise the magazine. Well, we usually aren't. On Thursdays. On Thursdays, we are never mean to people who praise the magazine. From 3:05-3:10.

I was just wondering what it takes to make a **chocolate cheese cake.** Second, what would someone have to do to be able to get a job working with you guys? Third, in the Nov/Dec issue (with FIF on the cover) there was an exceptionally long email by a **disgruntled reader.** In light of that and other such individuals who think that your "Viennese" writers are far too sarcastic or argumentative or that you can't portray Christ and have a sense of humor, I'm writing in your favor. Chicken soup is good if you have a cold.

Chris Lyons
via the Internet

1) Chocolate, cake, cheese and a teaspoon of love. 2) Jobs here are like a monarchy—somebody has to die before a spot opens up. 3) Seriously, how come you don't ever hear about someone being "gruntled"?

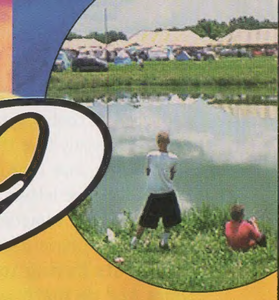
Getting the right CD is hard for me. You never know what it's like until you pay $15 and find out you don't like it or decide you want something else. Your mag makes it much easier. I am also encouraged that you never lose your Christian values. I am surprised, though, that you even post letters from people who are against you or are upset. Nonetheless, keep it going. Hope to see the next issue soon—and **lay off the spicy foods.**

Brian Chris Baker
Tacoma, WA

This space is intentionally not left blank.

I love *7ball*. I plan on studying journalism in college, and I

cornerstone 99



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Appleseed Cast
Ashley Cleveland
Audio Paradox
Ballydowse
Beanbag
Blaster the Rocketman
Blindside
Born Blind
Brainwash Projects
brandtson
Buddy & Julie Miller
Burlap to Cashmere
Chasing Furies
Clear
Cybershadow
Danielson Famile
Deluxtone Rockets
Disciple
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Eva O
Five Iron Frenzy
Ghoti Hook
Glenn Kaiser
Havalina Rail Co.
Headnoise
Huntingtons
Insyderz
Jars of Clay
Jason & the G-Men
Juliana Theory
Joy Electric
K2S
La Semilla
Left Out
Morella's Forest
Newsboys
NIV
November Commandment
Officer Negative
One·21
Overcome
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The Ragamuffin Band
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am going to write for *7ball* (or start my own cool magazine—ha!). I especially love the smart-mouth dude that comments on all the letters you get. I have only one complaint: A lot of pages don't have page numbers. **I hate having to sit there and do math** problems in my head to figure out what page I'm on. Would it kill you to have a tiny number at the bottom of every page? No. Now how can I get rid of my warts?

Kristin Peach
via the Internet

*Page numbers cause warts.**

**Source: the* Rogan Journal of Medicine, *issue 572, page 28, paragraph 12.*

It's **awesome** having a Christian magazine that covers all kinds of different groups. I like that you don't just do popular groups like dc Talk (no offense, I happen to like them) and others. I like that you do reviews on new bands. Could you do one on Buck's new album? I also really like your *Gas* CDs. It lets me know how bands sound, so I can decide if I want to buy the album or not.

Gregory Hawkins
via the Internet

Hey, remember the monkey in Raiders of the Lost Ark, *or from the Cocoa Crispies ad?*

I've noticed that most of your letters have suggestions, so here's mine: Get ahold of Randy Stonehill and do an article on the face of Christian rock when he helped start the industry and now (by the way, *Welcome to Paradise* is still one of the best Christian rock albums ever). When I started listening to Christian music in '92 you could count the good Christian alternative albums on one hand (OK, really on one finger—*Mindsize* by Poor Old Lu), and now you're the only way I can keep up. One last thing: I'm in a Christian band, and I was wondering what your criteria is for being in the "Somebody sign these guys." **We call our style "flunk"** (folk/funk).

Craig Phillips
via the Internet

Where have you been? That genre's not called "flunk." It's "founk." There's a huge scene in Peoria.

7ball used to be a great magazine, and it still is for people who sit in their room and listen to ska all day. For those of us who have realized that **cool ska ended with Operation Ivy**, please put something new in your magazine. You're wasting my mom's money by sending me the same information every two months. Keep up the good work.

Matt Wertz
via the Internet

Please thank your mother for the money. Every dollar sent in helps fund our ongoing research into ska. We plan far-reaching coverage, done completely in anagrams.

Do you guys know any of Greg **Long's '99 tour dates?**

Greta Fore
via the Internet

Yes, we do.

CORRECTION: Chasing Furies sounds nothing like Crosby, Stills & Nash. We apologize for any confusion.

HOW TO WRITE US: Letters in section may be larger than they appear. You can email yours to us at 7ball@7ball.com, or mail it to 7ball Letters, 2525-C Lebanon Pike, Box 6, Nashville, TN 37214. When emailing, please include your name and try to capitalize and punctuate like a normal person (those all-caps and no-caps messages are annoying). Not affiliated with the American Red Cross. Sanitized for your protection. Employees and their families are not eligible. Watch for falling rocks. Limited time offer, call now to ensure prompt delivery. May be too intense for some viewers. No money down. Keep away from open flames and avoid inhaling fumes.

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PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER SHAUN HELTON

EDITOR IN CHIEF "HE'S SWELL" CHRIS WELL
MANAGING EDITOR "BRING THA PAIN" CAMERON STRANG
EDITORIAL COORDINATOR "YOU CAN'T FAULT HER" SUZIE WALTNER
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT "THE FRESHMAKER" CARA BAKER
EDITORIAL INTERN "I HATE MUFFINS" ALI HUTCHINS

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS AMY E. DIXON, MARGARET FEINBERG, THOM GLADHILL, DAVID JENISON, BRIAN Q. NEWCOMB, MIKE PARKER, AMY SONDOVA, STEVE TUDOR, NANCY VAN ARENDONK, DEREK WALKER

ART DIRECTOR MATTHEW LEIGHTON CROW
ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR JESSICA FOLKINS
DESIGNER MARK NEUBAUER

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS VICKI KRINGS

MANAGER OF SUBSCRIBER SERVICES KYLE CHOWNING

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGERS DALE WILSTERMANN, GINA COHEN

DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL MARKETS SHANA SMITH

WWW.7BALL.COM
WEB ADMINISTRATOR KYLE CHOWNING
WEBMASTER BRAD KOLTAS

BATMAN BRUCE WAYNE

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7ball
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SUBSCRIPTION EMAIL:
subscriptions@7ball.com

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ADVERTISING & EDITORIAL OFFICES:
2525-C Lebanon Pike, Box 6
Nashville, TN 37214

VOICE (615) 872-8080
FAX (615) 872-9786

EDITORIAL EMAIL:
7ball@7ball.com

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News, Views & Oddities

by Cameron Strang

where more Americans get their news than any other nationality.

loud

A recent issue of ***Regeneration Quarterly*** magazine reports that King's X lead singer and bassist Doug Pinnick has accepted the homosexual lifestyle. In the article, "If There Is a God, We Need to Talk," Pinnick talks candidly about the struggles he's had with his sexual identity. "I didn't want it to be this way," he told Mark Joseph, the magazine's contributing editor of music. "I fasted and prayed, begged God to change me. I even became celibate and was miserable and lonely and desperate for love." Pinnick feels his adult struggle with homosexuality is rooted in the lack of a father during his childhood. "The person who [abused] me was a great, nice person who was my hero and loved me to death," he says. "Now I look back and realize he was a complete pedophile." Pinnick now faces the prospect of having to work through his homosexuality and Christianity in the public spotlight. "When a person comes to church and confesses [they are gay], quit treating them like they are a terrible person or it's the worst thing in the world," he says. "We're already convinced that we're terrible." To view the complete interview online, visit *www.regenerator.com/ifgod.html*.

Following their hit debut, ***On Your Feet***, Spoken returns with their sophomore effort, ***What Remains***. Jyro Xhan (Fold Zandura) has taken the production reins and makes an appearance on their first single, a cover of Christian music's 1996 song of the year, "People Get Ready, Jesus Is Coming" by Crystal Lewis. The album also pulls off a cool duet with rappers K2S. Spoken's rapcore, aggressive music and bold, unashamed lyrics make for a stand-out album.

Speaking of hardcore and hip-hop, .rod laver just released *Essence* ***Of The Game*** on Screaming Giant.

Armchair Rebellion, the debut from UK breakbeat/thrash/techno/hip-hop crew Psalmistry just released in the UK and Europe. The group is a 5-piece band from Bristol, England, that sounds a little like Prodigy and Chemical Brothers. For more info, email *psalmistry14@hotmail.com*.

Hard-music crew P.O.D. will be releasing a six-track EP on Tooth and Nail this month. The group's full-length release on Atlantic Records will hit later this year.

When punk band Crashdog began a sabbatical last year, vocalist Andrew Mandell and bassist Brian Grover teamed up with fellow members of Chicago's Jesus People USA community (including Mandell's wife, Robin) to form Ballydowse, a new band with an original sound. "Singing has always been a dream, and I turned that dream into a prayer," new vocalist Robin Mandell says. "Andrew asked me about singing with him a year ago. To do something I've always wanted and to do it with the man I love is great. We really prayed about this and feel the Lord is supporting us." The tunes on ***The Land, The Bread And The People*** (Grrr Records) range from Celtic to punk to early oi to ethnic folk.

ZAO is currently in the studio recording a new project with producer Barry Poynter. Poynter has produced most of Tooth and Nail's hardcore and some punk bands, including Stretch Arm Strong, Juliana Theory and Embodyment. He has an amazing ability to get a thick, fat sound out of the music.

Bettie Rocket Records recently released the sampler ***West Coast Madness—Vol. 1***, featuring 12 tracks of punk, alternative and ska (selling for $2.99). For more info, visit their website: *www.bettierocket.com*.

New Releases

Solid State Sampler	April 6	Solid State
Stretch Arm Strong	April 20	Solid State
P.O.D.	April 20	Tooth and Nail
Spitfire	April 20	Solid State
Deluxetone Rockets	April 20	Tooth and Nail
Officer Negative	April 21	Screaming Giant
90 Lb Wuss	May 4	Tooth and Nail

Always remember you're unique, *just like everyone else.*

The Halo Friendlies' self-titled debut last spring turned heads, but the recent addition of Ginger Reyes (The Israelites) makes the young ladies of punk rock stronger than ever. The new 5-song EP ***Acid Wash*** shows they can deliver an album as strong as their live show, which was seen this year opening for the likes of Rancid, MxPx, Dance Hall Crashers, Homegrown and The Warped Tour. How has newfound life on the road stretched the band? "We know this is a ministry," the Friendlies' Deanna Moody says. "There is accountability. Our personal life with the Lord is going to reflect on how we are outside the [tour] van. It is one challenge after another. God is going to really use us mightily; it is a total blessing." The new EP is just a brief look into the group's full-length album due this fall. "We don't want to come off just being a cute band," Cheryl Hecht says. "We have something to say."

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05.13.99 - Minneapolis, MN - 612-781-8488
05.14.99 - Chicago, IL - 847-506-1024
05.15.99 - Detroit, MI - 734-434-4359
05.16.99 - Lansing, MI - 517-482-2252
05.17.99 - Ft. Wayne, IN - 219-627-6537
05.18.99 - Indianapolis, IN - 317-243-9396
05.19.99 - Cleveland, OH - 330-971-9008
05.20.99 - Toledo, OH - 330-971-9008
05.21.99 - Columbus, OH - 614-899-2404
05.22.99 - Lancaster, PA - 717-392-3206
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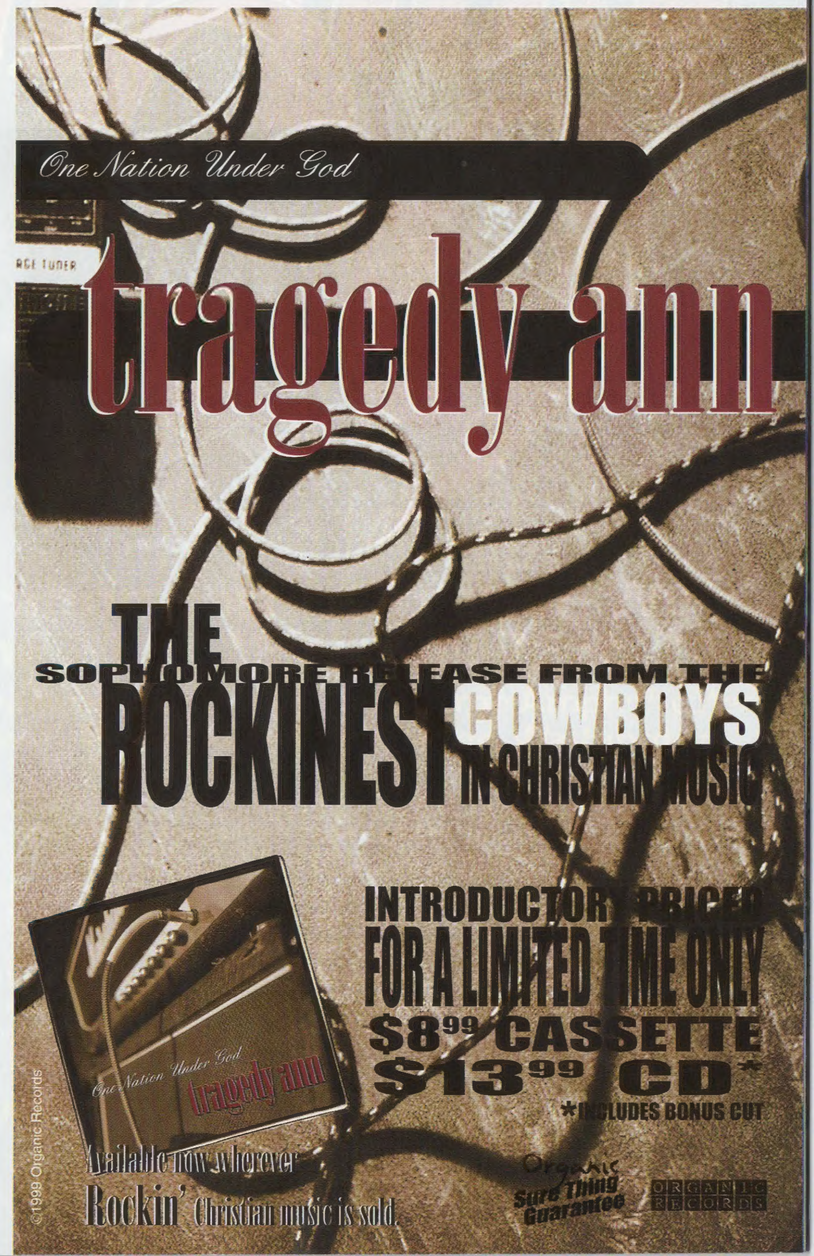
05.31.99 - Nashville, TN - 615-360-8463
06.01.99 - Little Rock, AR - 501-666-2267
06.02.99 - St. Louis, MO - 618-624-5577

loud 40

1 SELFMINDEAD
"Progress" (Solid State)
2 STIR
"Second Hand Savior" (Kalubone)
3 EXTOL
"Burial" (Solid State)
4 KING JAMES
"Frenzy" (Kalubone)
5 GATHERING OF SOULS
"Rust" (Seven)
6 THE BLAMED
"Covered" (Grrr)
7 WYRICK
"Supernatural" (Rugged)
8 MASSIVIVID
"Forgiven" (Tattoo)
9 DEUTERONOMIUM
"Northern Praise" (Little Rose)
10 ELDER
"Sugar Medicine" (Bulletproof)

Chart reprinted courtesy of the *Progressive Airplay Journal*. Action figures sold separately. Add toner. Apply only to affected area.



The Six Most Popular Baked Potato Toppings

1. SOUR CREAM AND CHIVE

Pros: Creamy with an oniony zest
Cons: There's a con?
Comment: Common topping with an uncommon taste. Said one taster: "The combination of chives coupled with the thick, moist sour cream is a taste sensation not to be denied."

2. BACON BITS AND CHEESE

Pros: A lot of people love cheese
Cons: A lot of people hate Bacon Bits
Comment: You've got your cheese, you've got your fake, shredded bacon—need we say more?

3. SALT AND BUTTER

Pros: Inexpensive
Cons: Inexpensive means "cheap"
Comment: Said one taster: "It's got flavor, but not too much. Very conservative. When I splurge, I like to add another scoop of butter."

4. PLAIN

Pros: Healthy
Cons: Boring
Comment: Perfect for snacking while you're driving. Said one taster: "Without the toppings, I like to eat it with my hands."

5. CHOCOLATE SAUCE AND SPRINKLES

Pros: You ain't gonna get it at Wendy's
Cons: You ain't gonna get it at Wendy's
Comment: "WHO THE HECK PUT CHOCOLATE SAUCE AND SPRINKLES ON MY POTATO?!?"

6. BROCCOLI AND CHEESE

Pros: Calcium and vegetables in one big, texture-filled swoop
Cons: Who wants hard chunks of cold broccoli in their potato?
Comment: "I guess this is better than having rickets."

modern rock

Music enthusiasts, want evidence the state of the industry is forever changing? Look no further than this item: Seagram Co.'s Universal Music Group has announced the names of nearly 500 employees and 250 recording artists who will be dismissed in the wake of their $10.4 billion acquisition of Universal and PolyGram last year. The massive downsizing will affect labels A&M (which has been shut down), Geffen, Interscope, Motown, Mercury and Island, among others. Out of the 65 artists signed to A&M—mainstream label home to Amy Grant, MxPx and Burlap To Cashmere—only 20 are expected to remain with Universal Music Group after the re-organization is completed some time in July.

One of our favorite indie bands, Waterdeep, has signed to Squint Entertainment—label home to Sixpence and Burlap to Cashmere. Look for the Wichita, Kan.,-based group's album in stores this fall or visit *www.waterdeep.com*.

Christian ska from the East Coast is rare, but The Skadaddles' new one, ***Scoop It Up!*** (N•Soul), is helping give the region a name. The band is different—three members of the 9-piece group are brothers, and the bassist is only 13. The group has already played with Squad 5-0, The Insyderz, The Waiting, Grammatrain, Havalina Rail Co., and others, logging over 80 shows last year. Check out their website at *www.skadaddles.com*.

Hokus Pick is in the studio recording their sixth album with producer Russ Long. The yet-unnamed project hits stores late summer or early fall. Meanwhile, Greatest Picks (including three new songs) released in late February.

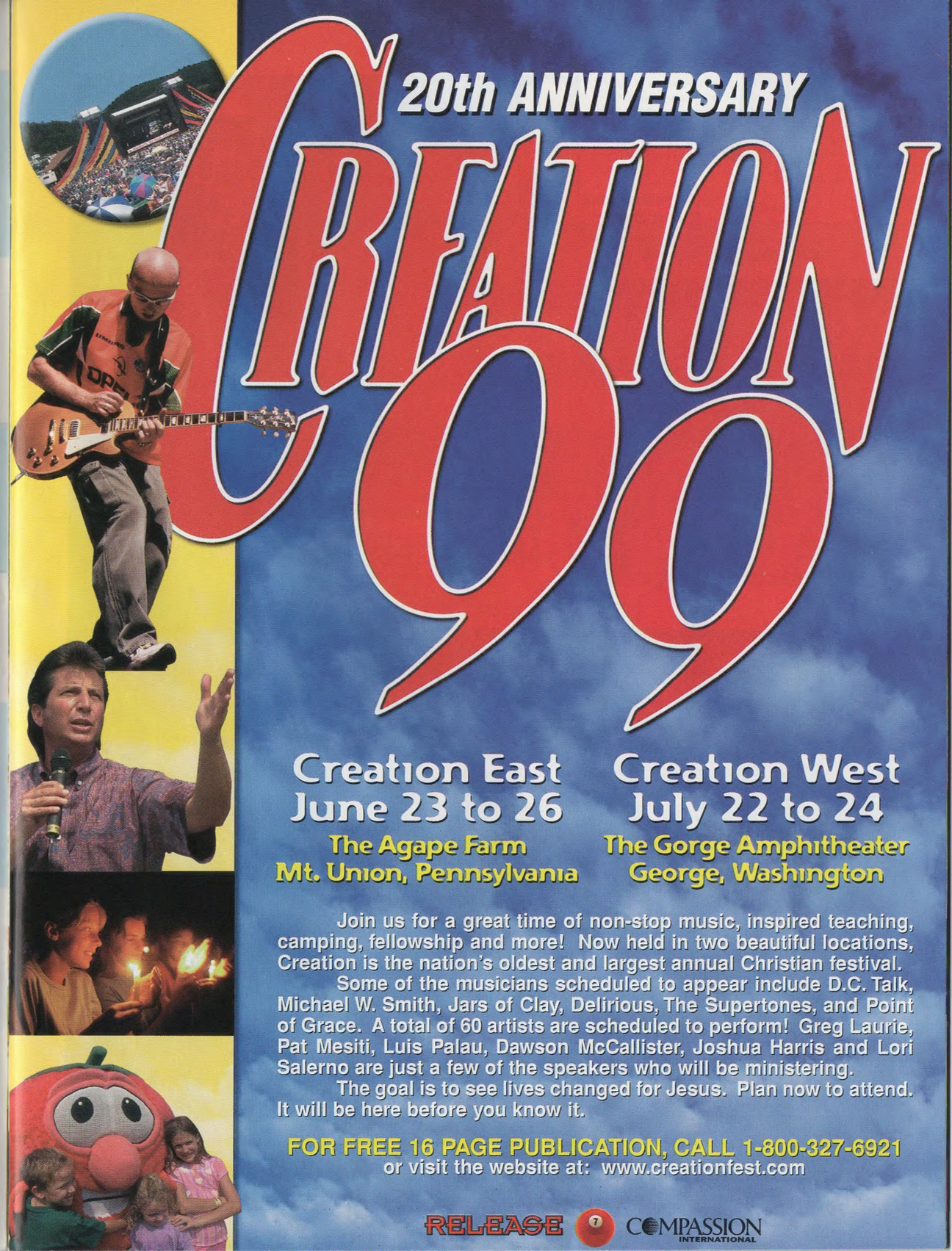
While touring with All Star United and Silage this spring, the guys in The Normals—Andy, Mark and Clayton—pulled their share of pranks. At a gig in North Carolina the band rigged a six-foot ceramic angel they found backstage and lowered it onto the stage during All Star United's set, breaking the band's concentration. Did All Star get their revenge? We can't print that.

Following the release of their second disc, ***New Way To Be Human,*** Switchfoot is now touring with Five Iron Frenzy. Watch for them in a town near you.

If you're in college, you probably watch ***Saved By The Bell*** reruns every afternoon. Admit it. Oddly enough, Dennis Haskins—better known as the show's principal, Mr. Belding—was spotted at a recent dc Talk concert in California. (Insert witty "Screech" or "saved by" quip here:_____.)

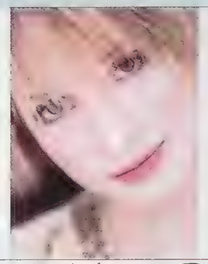
Cornerstone Festival is downsizing their alternative scene this summer. Several of the smaller tent stages that showcased the more diversified music will be combined into just one tent. According to a Cornerstone rep, the reorganization is designed to "offer a bit of something for everyone, without overwhelming [attendees] with choices."

Send the Beggar is currently recording their second release on Rustproof Records with Mike McElvoy, the eight-year musical director for Steve Winwood and producer of the Happy Mondays and the Brand New Heavies. McElvoy recently became a Christian and should bring a unique twist to the guys' sound.



HEAD-TO-HEAD:

	Sixpence None The Richer	TV's Richard Karns
PROFESSION:	Rock stars edge: Sixpence	Actor: Plays a tool show assistant
CAN BE SEEN:	At cool concert venues edge: Sixpence	On a 13" TV in your dorm room
CATCH PHRASE:	"Oh-h Kiss Me"	"I Don't Think So, Tim" edge: Karns
HAS BEEN CALLED:	Six-pack, not the pitcher edge: Sixpence	Al "My Mom's A Cow" Borland
FULL, WOOLY BEARD:	No	Yes edge: Karns
CAREER:	On the rise edge: Sixpence	The sun is setting
PRICE OF FAME:	Will have to sing "Kiss Me" at every concert for years	Will have to answer to "Hey, Al" for the rest of his life edge: Karns



New Releases

Caedmon's Call	April 13	Essential
Plumb	April 13	Essential
Deluxetone Rockets	April 20	Tooth and Nail
Priesthood	April 21	Metro 1
Fraidy Cats	April 21	Bulletproof
Channelsurfers	May	Organic
Moon Traveler	May	Organic
Satellite Soul	May 18	Forefront
Plankeye	May 18	BEC
Dingees	June 15	BEC
Shaded Red	June 29	Cadence

progressive rock

1 ALL STAR UNITED
"Superstar" (Essential)
2 LLOYD
"Don't Wanna Know" (Organic)
3 AUDIO ADRENALINE
"New Body" (Forefront)
4 VIVA VOCE
"Heartstring" (Cadence)
5 SKILLET
"Suspended In You" (Forefront)
6 SUPERTONES
"One Voice" (BEC)
7 THIRD DAY
"How's Your Head" (Reunion)
8 SEVEN DAY JESUS
"Always Comes Around" (Forefront)
9 SILAGE
"Verb" (Essential)
10 MUKALA
"Skip To The End" (Essential)
11 HUMAN
"Feel" (Organic)
12 CHRIS TAYLOR
"Learn To Pray" (Rhythm House)
13 JASON INGRAM BAND
"What's It Gonna Be Like" (Audience)
14 THE WAITING
"Make It Disappear" (Sparrow)
15 BETWEEN THIEVES
"Carried Away" (Tattoo)
16 NEWSBOYS
"Woo Hoo" (Star Song)
17 PETE STEWART
"Better Off" (Forefront)
18 SOULFOOD 76
"Get It Together" (Freedom)
19 TY TABOR
"The Truth" (Metal Blade)
20 BUCK
"Next" (Tattoo)
21 DEAR EPHESUS
"On West B" (Bulletproof)
22 POLARBOY
"Do You Think" (Rustproof)
23 KING'S X
"Higher Than God" (Metal Blade)
24 BLEACH
"Land Of The Lost" (Forefront)
25 SIXPENCE NONE THE RICHER
"Kiss Me" (Squint)

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Approved for veterans. As seen on TV. At participating locations only.

"With a heart and soul for ministry and missions, Big Dog Small Fence is breaking into the Christian ska scene with a sound all its own....like nothing else you'll find out there. Overall a good mix and something that stands out...just refreshingly different."
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hip-hop dance

Grapetree Records has opened their new 11-room, state-of-the-art studio in Round Rock, Texas. The label plans to release 30 albums in 1999, a feat helped by the label's recent exclusive distribution agreement with Christian music giant EMI.

You can stop holding your breath. The long-anticipated third album from the Gospel Gangstaz, ***I Can See Clearly Now,*** finally hit stores April 20. After a few years in flux, the GGs have landed at B-Rite Records, home to Trinitee 5:7 and God's Property.

Rap group 7th Infantry—formerly known as Overground Souljahs—is releasing a new project on Triune G Records, cancelling the re-release of their CD *Unbelievable*. Triune G recently signed another rap group, God Sons, whose upcoming album is tentatively titled ***Looking For Jehovah.***

J.R. Barbee, former member of Prodigal Sons and current frontman of N•Soul's ***Nitro Praise*** team, is releasing a Fatboy Slim-type techno disc on Pamplin Records in July. The album's producers include A.J. Mora, Scott Blackwell, Cloud2 Ground, Greg Hobgood and Paradigm Shift.

Street Party producer DJ Maj has a new mix tape, ***Sabbatical Transit***, featuring Knowdaverbs, Flynn, Boogiemonsters and more. Check out the website at *home1.gte.net/fistpic*.

In case you missed it in the last ***7ball,*** the Cross Movement is back with ***House Of Representatives*** (Seventh Street Records). The group's seven members, two of which are associate ministers, have matched their straight East Coast hip-hop bar for bar with strong Bible-based lyrics—not to mention vision-based ministry. "We simply want to bring God's agenda and truth," the Movement's Tonic says. "And because we've been faithful with a little, God has given us favor. The plans we thought were far off look as if they may be happening in the near future." Check out *www.crossmovement.com*.

Speaking of Seventh Street, the eight-year-old rap, R&B and hip-hop label just joined up with distribution company Diamante Music Group. The alliance gives the company an outlet to every Christian retail store, meaning artists like The Cross Movement and Urban Disciple will be available nationwide. The team at the label clearly state, "We have assembled a group of artists with vision and purpose. Their primary goal is to reach souls with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There is no compromising this mission. The label is unique in that all artists on the label family are accountable to one another and must mutually agree to any new artist signing to the label. Frequent prayer, study and reflection are vital to our ministry." Check out their website at *www.seventhstreetrecords.com*.

Next time you're watching BET you might catch Knowdaverbs' new video, which has been added to the station's light rotation. It's a platform he doesn't take lightly. "My heart is for youth," the Nashville-based rapper says. "I know today a lot of hip-hop determines how one talks and dresses; kids are being fed perverted stuff every day. There are a lot of people who need the Word."

Oklahoma-based techno/dance artist Cloud2Ground's new album is due in July, a project which will follow up his N•Soul release *emajn*.

ForeFront Records recently released ***Jumping In The House of God II,*** featuring high-energy tracks from Raze, World Wide Message Tribe, Delirious and other UK acts.

At *www.trancedomain.com* every Sunday night from 7-10 Scott Blackwell hosts "Sunday School"—three hours of non-stop dance mixes by Blackwell and various guest DJs. The show includes an eclectic mix of house, trance and D 'n' B and is delivered to the Net via Southern California's Lifted in the Micah studios.

The Code Green Tour kicked off April 23 featuring The Echoing Green and Code Of Ethics.

Dirt (Representing The Shadow Of The Locust) has finally released ***Plague*** on Rescue Records. Featuring more than 30 guest artists, the album represents a wide range of hip-hop styles.

Bust out the leisure suits for K2S' "How Deep Is Your Love," a remake of the Bee Gee's ***Saturday Night Fever*** classic featuring Crystal Lewis. The tune appears on ***Better Dayz***, the group's sophomore project on Metro 1.

"Hip-spanic" artist Geno V. incorporates Tejano and Tex-Mex with his trademark Spanish/English rap on his new Grapetree release, which features more musical variety than his previous project.

Urban Disciple is not only a rapper, but a full-time inner-city youth pastor as well. His new album, ***The Missin Element*** (Seventh Street) combines a unique East Coast style with a blend of smooth R&B and Mediterranean sounds, throwing in some Spanish and Greek lyrics as well.

The first three volumes of ***Muzik Ta Ride 2*** are the highest selling hip-hop compilations ever. With the new ***Volume 4***, Grapetree once again pulls together a project showcasing the gospel hip-hop variety on their label. The label's come a long way in the last couple years—and this collection may surprise a few fans.

Watch for the new release from Mr. Real, a hip-hop veteran discovered by Prime Minister. Real has been polishing his skills since '88, when he rapped under the name Too Sharp.

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rhythm

1 KIRK FRANKLIN
"Revolution" (Gospo Centric)
2 RAZE
"That's The Way" (Forefront)
3 LAKITA
"Make It Right" (N•Soul)
4 WORLD WIDE MESSAGE TRIBE
"Heatseeker" (Warner Resound)
5 KNOWDAVERBS
"The Syllabus" (Gotee)
6 T-BONE
"It Ain't Easy" (Metro One)
7 LAKITA
"Speak To The Hand" (N•Soul)
8 T-BONE
"Demon Killa" (Metro One)
9 WORLD WIDE MESSAGE TRIBE
"Everything I Need" (Warner Resound)
10 MASSIVIVID
"Flesh Wound" (Tattoo)

Chart reprinted courtesy of the *Progressive Airplay Journal*. Avoid extreme temperatures and store in a cool dry place. Batteries not included.

YOU TOO MAY BE A WINNER!!

6 Easy Tips To Win Any Sweepstakes*

1. Put your entry in the mail.
2. Put a stamp on your entry before you put it in the mail.
3. Put your entry in an envelope before you put a stamp on it.
4. Make sure you check all the right boxes before you put your entry in an envelope.
5. Make sure you've removed all the pieces from the original envelope before you check the right boxes.
6. Get your mail.

*If you follow all our simple steps you are guaranteed at LEAST a one in 16 trillion chance in winning.

LA Symphony

From The Pharcyde to the Black Eyed Peas, Los Angeles has been a breeding ground for hip-hop innovation. Count LA Symphony next in line. The crew is a collection of nine MCs and one DJ that brings back the creativity and energy from the days of mic-rocking house parties. Throughout *Composition No. 1* (Eartube Empire), Cookbook, bTwice, Coy, Flynn, J-Beits, Joey L., Pigeon John, Sharlok Poems, Trendi MC and Uno Mas combine uncommon diversity with uncommon humor—both of which most hip-hop sorely lacks.

At the label's website, *www.eartube.com*, you can check out *Composition*'s title track, "Heartfelt Rhymes," "Incomplete Thoughts" and "San Diego" through free download in mp3 and Real Audio formats. This breakthrough 17-track project is PHAT—one of the best hip-hop projects we've ever heard. The guys at Eartube Empire outdid themselves with this one.

Words We Forgot

Actual words that do not appear in this issue

Letch—(noun) a boggy patch of ground.
Inspissated—(adjective) Thickened or hardened by absorption or evaporation.
Thridace—(noun) Inspissated lettuce juice used as a sedative.

New Releases

True II Society	April	Grapetree
G.O.G.'s	April	Grapetree
Disctronica	April 20	KMG
Gospel Gangstaz	April 20	B-Rite
Christafari	April 21	Lion of Zion
Antidote	April 21	N•Soul
Joy Electric	April 22	BEC
L.G. Wise	May	Grapetree
Christ Fa Real	May	Grapetree
G.R.I.T.Z.	May	Gotee
Str8 Young Gangstaz	June	Grapetree
Lee Boyd (Br Grimm)	June	Grapetree
Out Of Eden	June 15	Gotee

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342

Prime Minister
The Millennium
This is a new era for music as his second album, *Prime Time Part II: The Millennium*, reaches new heights in rap music.

340

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339

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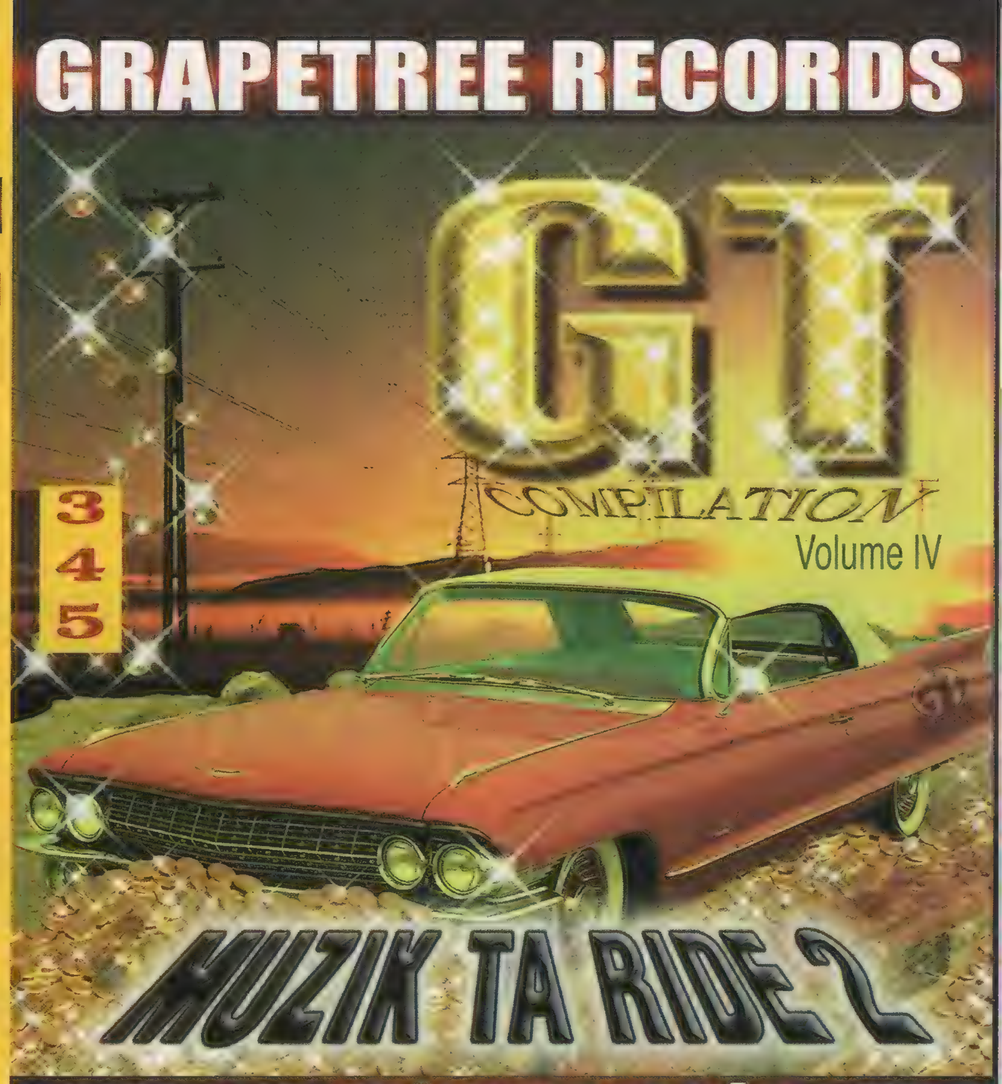

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When You Can't Get Away

By Cameron Strang

I'm tired. I mean really, *really* tired. Physically, emotionally, mentally, even spiritually, I'm just tapped out. Maybe it's because it's 2 a.m., or because I've been working 60-hour weeks with perpetually looming deadlines, I don't know. Whatever the reason, I'm worn.

It actually reminds me of how I felt around finals week in college. The sleepless nights spent studying coupled with the seemingly never-ending stress of looming assignments, projects and exams was enough to make even the strongest student crack. And since it's May, some of you are probably feeling this way, too.

It's a tough place to be. "Maybe all I need is a good night's sleep," we say, but all the nights and all the naps in the world can't manage to make us feel refreshed. "Then, I just need to get away from it all for a few days"—but when we have to get back to our everyday lives it's apparent nothing has really changed. **So what's the answer?**

As much as I hate to give the cliché Christian response, through desperate necessity I've found it's the only one that's anything other than a temporary fix. We have to go to the Lord. In my life, the times when I've felt my emptiest, my driest, have typically been the ones when I've been least likely to go to Him. I don't know why that is (probably the same reason I tuck my tail in shame after I sin rather than approaching His throne of forgiveness), but it can't be that way. He is our only source of strength. He gives the only true peace. In Him is the only place we can find rest.

This time of year is always crazy. Whether it be school, job, relationships, whatever—it seems spring is a time of growth and change. Our lives are being stretched (which isn't always easy), and we have this tendency to try and shoulder huge loads by ourselves—completely forgetting He never intended it that way. He created us as weak vessels; the only yoke He meant for us to carry is His own. He said He'd take care of everything if we'd just give it to Him.

So what's our hold-up? Why don't we? We shouldn't even *get* to the point where we're so worn out, but **human nature is to try to take on more than you can handle**. If you're shouldering the stress of an uncertain tomorrow, are feel emotionally drained or just can't carry your load, give it to Him. He knows. He cares. He wants to help.

All we have to do is take the things that have been weighing us down and lay them at His feet. Leave them there and never pick them back up. **Let Him carry the load** because, well, His shoulders are a lot bigger than ours.

It almost sounds too easy, but it's exactly how God wants it. He's in control.

Now go get a good night's sleep.

Go Deeper

Ps 1:1-2
Ps 37:4,11,37
Prov 3:13-18,24
Matt 11:29
Heb 4:1-11
Eph 2:14-17
Isa 32:2,17-18

A Word From Our Sponsor

Ps 4:8
I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.

Isa 26:3
You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.

Matt 11:29
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find reest for your souls.

Rom 5:1
Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rom 8:6
The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.

Phil 4:7
And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Col 3:15
Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

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Willmar, MN
DC Talk
Jars of Clay
Eli
Raze
Michael W. Smith
Rebecca St. James
Supertones
REAL magazine
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Eli
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Raze
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DC Talk
Pegtop
The Spärks
Shaded Red
Plumb
Jennifer Knapp
Caedmon's Call
Supertones
Bart Campolo
Michael W. Smith
Real Magazine
STAGE TWO
ONE:21
Blame Lucy
Blah
Speck
My Friend Stephanie
Dear Ephesus
Bill Greenwood
Echoing Green
Hokus Pick
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STAGE THREE
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Breakin g The Mold

by Margaret Feinberg

In late summer of '97, a set of pastor kid siblings borrowed their parents' camper and followed the curvy mountain road from their home in Boulder, Colo., to nearby Estes Park. Prodded by their father, Danny Meeker (who also competed in the Christian Artist Seminar some 20-odd years ago), the trio headed to the famous YMCA of the Rockies to test their chops in Christian music.

In a field of conservatively dressed, track-backed aspiring artists, Joshua, Sarah and Rachel Meeker stood out like a silver nose ring—alluring but unavoidably in your face. It wasn't just the multiple piercings, Kool-Aid colored hair or platform shoes; it was an unmistakably different sound. The combination of electric and acoustic guitars gave the band an experimental flavor, while the female vocals rang with contempo sibling harmony. At the core of the artistic expression were songs Sarah penned by her deeply introspective and spiritually challenging self. One of her songs, "Nothing," captured a third place award; as a band, they placed second in the group competition. Together, the Meekers (then known as The Furies) turned the heads of a number of top A&R execs and made an unmistakable impression on the otherwise restrained event.

Today, the band is known as Chasing Furies (based on inspiring words pulled from influential musicians Over the Rhine and author C.S. Lewis). Their debut album, *With Abandon* (Sparrow), is marked by edgy rock musicianship and melodic vocals. The album has been described as Radiohead-meets-Sarah-McLachlan-with-an-edge, and it's expected to go big. Very big.

Sarah Meeker, 21, is the group's chief songwriter and vocalist while older brother, Joshua, 23, serves as lead guitarist and fellow songwriter. Quiet but graceful younger sis, Rachel, 18, adds her input with backup vocals and keyboards.

"Because we look different, we found that we can relate to a lot of people that would otherwise go unreached," Sarah observes. "As Christians, the Bible commands us not to judge, but non-Christians don't have those rules. They judge whether or not they can relate to you by the way you look. We've found a lot of people respond to our music and open up to us because they feel like they can talk to us. We've been able to bring people with different outward appearances into our home church and make them feel accepted. It's kind of like being an ambassador. Plus, I like my lip ring."

Josh doesn't like to use labels such as *Christian* or *secular* when describing Chasing Furies. "We've been called to be musicians," he explains. "The lyrics of our songs are very thought-provoking. It's not always the straightforward Jesus-died-on-the-cross-and-get-saved kind of stuff. The songs require listeners to look and listen into the lyrics. The song 'Nothing' is about the fact that we are nothing without the Lord, while 'Whisper Softly' talks about the way the Lord has waited on us and we have to choose Him. The lyrics lean toward ministry, but it's not an in-your-face style."

"Stylistically, they bring something completely new to our roster," says Leigh Ann Hardie, vice president of artist development for Sparrow. "The clincher, however, was what they are doing on a ministry level. They have a very clear vision of their place in the world and how God can use them as artists to draw people to Christ who might never set foot in a church."

The band recently performed at a Student Venture outreach in Boulder, Colo. Afterward, the band received a letter from one of the coordinators thanking them for the performance. "The letter said that after the concert 23 people came forward to someone—either a friend or those in charge of the event—and got saved," Sarah says. "It's awesome to see what God can do. That's what should happen. That's what it's all about.

"A lot of times in Christian music, musicians are called to speak as a pastor would from the pulpit," she explains. "We don't feel like that's what we've been called to do. There are people who come to concerts who are called to be intercessors while some are supposed to use their eloquence with words to share Jesus in conversation. We just sang and did our part and the other Christians at the concert did theirs. As a result, nearly two dozen accepted Christ.

"That's why we want to build up a crowd of people around us that when we go to a show, club or bar, Christians will show up and minister to those there. We desire that as a band—to have people come to a place like that and know it's OK because you get to reach out to people who wouldn't normally come to church."

One reason Josh and Sarah have such a heart for the unsaved is because they can relate; both have worked through a rebellious youth. Sarah experimented with drugs while Josh was involved with drinking, girls and cutting school. By the time Rachel came into her own, she had learned from her older siblings to "not even try smoking or any type of drugs—it's not worth it."

Several years ago at a youth retreat, Josh was asked to share his testimony. "I figured, I'll get up and say whatever, you know, *blah blah*," he says. "When I got up, the Lord broke me in front of all these kids. That was really the turning point for me."

"As preacher's kids, you're not supposed to have flaws," Sarah adds. "Growing up, when I had a problem and really wanted to talk to somebody about it, I never felt comfortable going to our pastor, because then he could tell my mom and dad. And I didn't want to tell other youth, because then I wouldn't be perfect in their eyes."

Sarah says that their experiences growing up helped them to realize that the main thing we all want—kids and adults alike—is someone we can relate to. "We want people to know we are so normal. We stumble. The main thing is, God's awesome and He will come pick us up."

"Through it all, our parents have been loving and supportive," Rachel says. "I think that a lot of times people don't see the importance of the family. Yet, our mom and dad are so involved in our lives. Dad makes business phone calls for us. Mom makes all of our out-of-town guests feel welcome. My little brother is our guitar tech. Josh's wife Rachel does the booking. We've been so blessed with an amazing family."

The entire family is united around the group's passion of erasing boundaries and reaching people. That, coupled with their conviction and enormous talent, ensures Chasing Furies will indeed make a mark on the Christian soundscape. They may be a little left of center,

but they're right on target. 7

celebrate festivus

Christian music festivals are as essential to summertime as lemonade, the beach, no school and the urban sombrero. They're like love bugs in the South: They always show up around the same time; they seem to multiply every year; you can't come close to catching all of them; and they get all over the front of your car on road trips.

But this year the festivals will be more exciting than ever. Sure, they're still outdoor; you can still camp; you'll still get sweaty. But this year *7ball* is giving away stuff. At each festival we attend (which is most of them), come by our booth and show off your *7ball* spirit. We don't care what you do—shave your head and paint it like a 7ball, cover your car in *7ball* stickers, whatever—just go nuts convincing us *7ball* is the best modern music mag on the planet.

At each fest, we'll give away prizes (like Scooby Snacks or quarters) to those of you who impress us and will pick one grand prize qualifier. We'll then take a picture of that person's *7ball* devotion back to HQ with us, where our crack team of trained monkeys and crazy people will vote to decide who wins the title of The Ultimate Music Festival *7ball* Reader Person Ever. He/she will receive an Alvarez electric/acoustic guitar and Crate GA60 amplifier (thank you, St. Louis Music).

Can he do it? Will he crack? Tune in next week to find out.

But before you whip out the body paint or do damage to your personal property, make sure you know where all the fests are. And to find out which ones we're attending, check *www.7ball.com*.

What: Ichthus
Where: Wilmore, KY
When: Thurs.-Sun., April 22-25
Who: Plumb, Supertones, Burlap, FIF, Polarboy, others
Info: *www.ichthus.org* or (606) 858-3001

What: Atlanta Fest
Where: Stone Mountain, GA
When: Wed.-Sat., June 16-19
Who: Delirious, Burlap to Cashmere, dc Talk, Jars, others
Info: *www.atlantafest.com* or (800) 783-8839

What: Creation East
Where: Mt. Union, PA
When: Wed.-Sat., June 23-26
Who: Chasing Furies, dc Talk, W's, Supertones, ASU, others
Info: *www.creationfest.com* or (800) 327-6921

What: Cornerstone
Where: Bushnell, IL
When: Wed.-Sun., June 30-July 4
Who: Jars, Sixpence, Insyderz, Burlap, Electrics, others on 8 stages
Info: *www.cornerstonefestival.com* or (800) 233-3378

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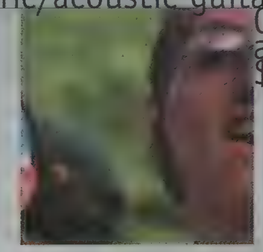

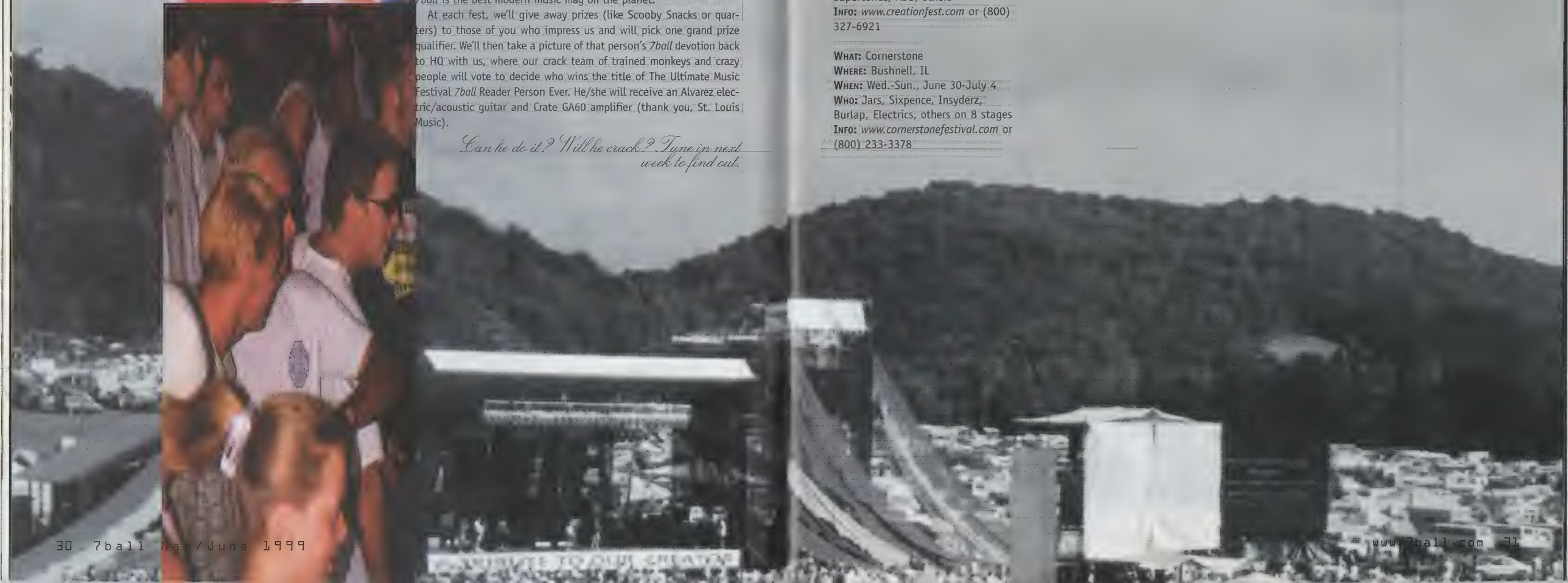

What: Sonshine
Where: Willmar, MN
When: Thurs.-Sat., July 8-10
Who: Third Day, dc Talk, Supertones, Shaded Red, Plumb, others on 3 stages
Info: *www.sonshinefestival.com* or (800) 233-3378

What: Creation West
Where: George, WA
When: Thurs.-Sat., July 22-24
Who: Burlap, Caedmon's, Squad 5-0, Shaded Red, Plankeye, others
Info: *www.creationfest.com* or (800) 327-6921

What: Rage Fest
Where: Phoenix, AZ
When: Friday, Aug. 6, 3 p.m.-midnight (indoor), then at a water park 'til 6 a.m.
Who: The Waiting, All Star United, Polarboy, The Corbans, others on 3 stages
Info: *www.azrage.com* or (520) 742-1168

What: Purple Door
Where: Lancaster, PA
When: Saturday, Aug. 21
Who: Sixpence, FIF, The W's, P.O.D., Joy Electric, Waterdeep, others on 3 stages
Info: *www.purpledoor.com* or (717) 392-3206

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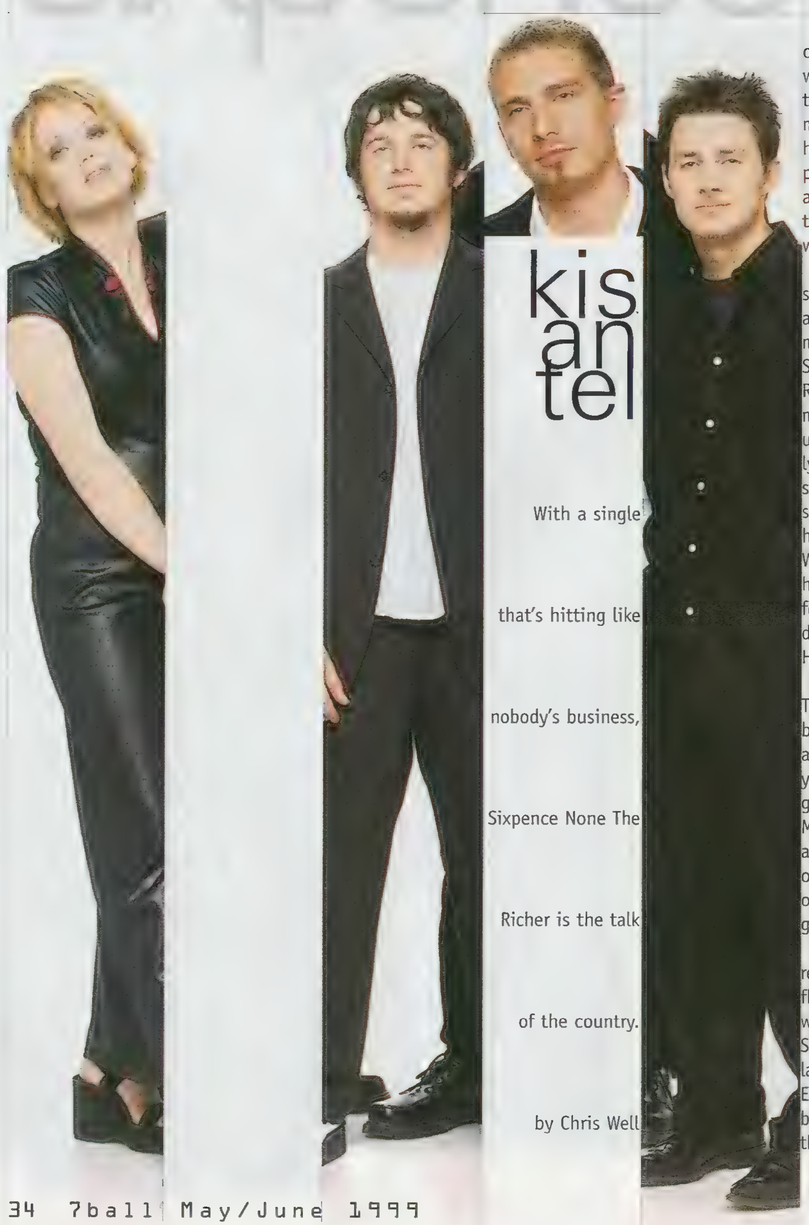


kissed an tell

With a single that's hitting like nobody's business, Sixpence None The Richer is the talk of the country.

by Chris Well

"I'm kind of out of touch with how we're perceived in the Christian community right now," he admits. "Are people looking at us and approving, or do they still kinda think we're out there?"

He's Matt Slocum, songwriter, guitarist and co-founder of media darlings Sixpence None The Richer. "I want to make sure people understand we really are trying to be salt and light," he says. "We've got our heads on straight. We still very much have a deep love for God and a deep desire to serve Him."

Sixpence None The Richer has become ubiquitous as of late. Odds are you've heard the gold-selling "Kiss Me" somewhere—on a passing car radio, on TV, at the movies or overhead at the grocery store.

But it's key to remember this is no flash in the pan we're talking about. Sixpence and their label, Squint Entertainment, have been working on this for some time.

Since their eponymous album was released late 1997, it's been quite a ride.

And lead singer Leigh Nash says it's also been a learning experience. "I think I've become a lot better about not getting stressed out about things I can't control," she says. "Playing on [*Late Night With Conan O'Brien*] helped a lot, because that's the scariest thing I'd ever done. And I realized it that day, *This is the scariest thing I've ever done; I'd better get myself under control right now, rather than go out there and just freak out.* I realized worrying about it wouldn't do me any good."

When they performed a week later for the syndicated *Donnie & Marie,* there was a bonus: "All our grandmothers were like, *Oh, that's what they do,*" Nash says. "Now, they're very, very proud. My grandmother said she got 'the big head'—that's what she calls it, not '*a* big head' but '*the* big head'—she said she could hardly get in the door after she saw that. That was really sweet."

Although "Kiss Me" carries no overt Christian content—Slocum describes it as "just kinda whimsical and poppy"—it still opens doors for them to be "salt and light." When they're interviewed, the easiest way to discuss their faith is to discuss the origin of the band's name. As they explain the Sixpence passage in C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity,* the interviewer not only discovers an emphasis on faith, but also the band's value of humility, the thrust of the passage. "It's still something that comes out in every single interview," Nash says. "Everybody brings it up."

And then there was their appearance on *Live with Regis & Kathie Lee:* one observer suggested Slocum should have included a toll-free number for viewers to order *Mere Christianity*. "I was thinking, this show has such a large viewership, it would just be great to bait people that they would go out and get this book," Slocum remembers. "I think it's one of the best apologetics books for the common man on Christianity. It's sort of like, how can we in 30 seconds make the largest impact? That seemed like the best way."

Despite the band's willingness to discuss their faith, there have been complaints that they have sold out. "But there's always going to be people like that," Nash sighs. "We're not going to make everyone happy. So we're going to find our home and hopefully have enough people there that we can make music for a long time."

Slocum says the Christian market's sluggish acceptance—in the face of a general market that loves them—bothered him a bit at first, but he's become more philosophical about it. "We've been looking for our niche for a long time and still are looking for it," he says. "It's cool and exciting that niche is starting to happen."

He would, however, still like the support of Christians. "But that doesn't necessarily have to be by record sales," he says. "Prayers and people rooting for us and wanting to see us succeed—that's the kind of support I would most want in the Christian community. At this point, I don't

think we're really interested in being stars in contemporary Christian music. So it doesn't bother me that we're not headed down that road."

One reason Christian music fans have been slower to embrace the band may be Slocum's often dark and introspective lyrics. Rather than being defensive, Slocum good-naturedly agrees. "I think that's going to take a lot of maturing on my part as a songwriter and as a person," he says. "My personality can be kind of introverted and complex. I think it's a matter of learning how to communicate and learning how to connect with an audience. I hope in the future I can connect much better with the Christian community and with the mainstream community and be a bridge between the two."

"We love to be able to do festivals and stuff and play for Christians," Nash says. "But if the market needs to push us out, then the market needs to push us out."

But she feels equally strongly that she still has a responsibility as a Christian to follow the Lord's lead. "If I determine in my heart to obey Him and do what He wants me to do, I'm just going to trust that I'm going to know what to do, I'm going to know what to say and when I'm supposed to say it. And that's all I can really do."

And these days, the Lord is keeping them pretty busy. "It's kinda gotten to the point where something new and exciting happens practically everyday," Slocum says. "It's almost like sensory overload."

But so far, while their record is selling more copies every week, the opportunities are growing faster than the profits. "We are certainly no richer, for all that's happened," Nash says. "We realize it can be very fleeting and it might be over with no financial payoff at all, but we're really happy and we enjoy the climb. But if it does happen, we need to be wise with our money and business decisions. It's wise to plan early, so we're trying to use our heads about stuff like that."

One healthy sign for their career is that the band has gone from playing for 300 a night to packing 1200-seat venues. For example, at a show in Rochester, N.Y., the club was already full as a line wound its way around the bus and half the building. "We were like, *This can't be for us,*" Nash recalls. "*Is there a new Burger King opening or something?* I couldn't believe it."

Another champion in this story is Squint, which has done more for Sixpence in the general market than any Christian label ever has without a mainstream partner. But, having been courted by secular labels in the past, Slocum sees something more special in working with Squint: "The whole intent was to take a band and give them a platform to be salt and light to the whole culture at large. If we'd gone to [a secular label], all these things would have been in a whole different context," he says. With Squint they can hit all the bases, but working with Christians. "I really like having that foundation going into these major public arenas."

It helps that this is not a brand-new band: The core of Sixpence has been together for eight years (Nash was only 13 the first time she and Slocum recorded "Trust"), with several recordings and hundreds of gigs to their credit. "I don't know if we could have been at that place to handle it correctly [before now]," Slocum says. "But it's God's timing. He knows when it's best."

"It gave us really level heads," Nash says. "But it's kind of a bummer, too; I think some of my excitement is jaded by the bad stuff that's happened to us. I'm not too excited, but I guess I wish I was, because it can be gone and I want to make sure I enjoy every moment for what it's worth."

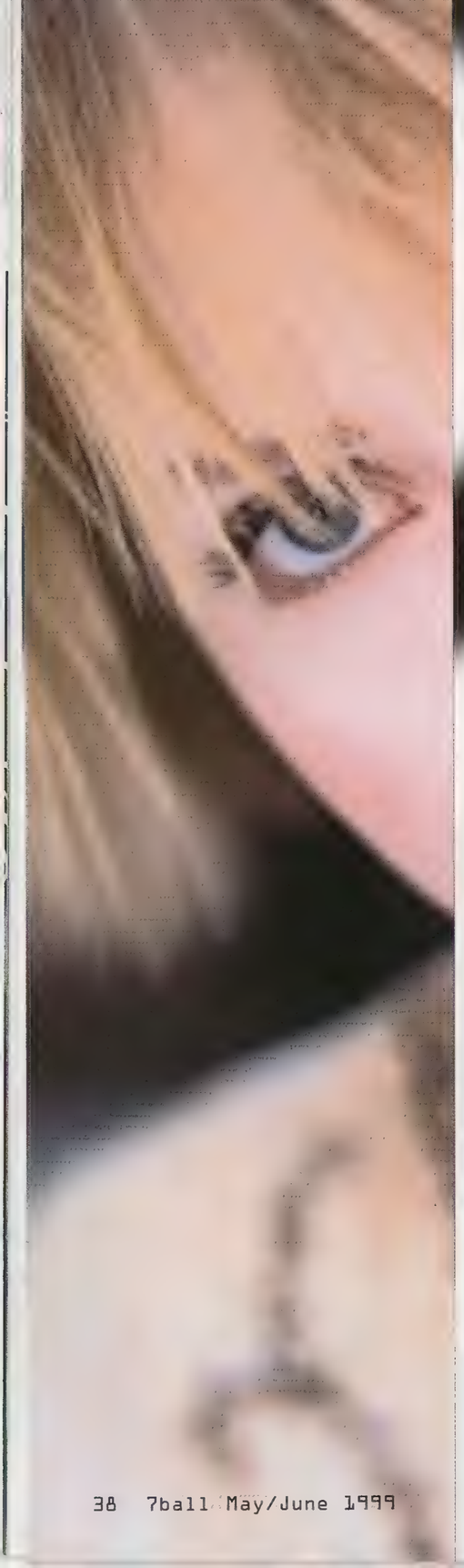
In some ways, it's odd that Sixpence has become a representative of Christianity in these outlets. Bandleader Matt Slocum is more accustomed to being a songwriter than being a speaker. "It's amazing God has put us in this place," he says. "A lot of times I'm like, *God, couldn't someone else do this better?* I'm so thankful, because this is helping us learn how to communicate and just be articulate, thoughtful representatives of what we believe Christianity to be. It's just neat to kinda be on the journey or whatever."

Squint publicist Jay Swartzendruber points out it's not only the band that has to represent Christianity. Since Squint doesn't have a secular partner, the label is fielding most of the general market's questions about the band's beliefs and their role in the Christian music market. "So the staff at Squint is answering questions like, *Is this a Christian band?*" he says. "We have a chance to discuss the Gospel, as we're explaining that Sixpence is not a contemporary Christian band."

One of the challenges for Nash is that she's still learning how to interact with non-Christians she meets at shows. "I've got kind of a warm personality," she says. "When I first meet somebody, I talk a lot and I'm very excited. I've noticed that it freaks them out. You know, I'm supposed to be cooler, a little more mellow. Maybe I should change a little bit so those conversations can happen, because I've definitely noticed that fast talk and a big smile is kinda freaking them out."

She's also found that when she does make contact, there's still a learning curve. "I've talked to a lot of girls who will tear up during our conversation," she says. "You know they're not Christians maybe by

"We really are trying to be salt and light," Slocum says.



the way they're dressed or carrying themselves, and they're just really, really touched. And I don't know how to handle that. What am I supposed to say?"

That's a question Slocum struggles with, too. "I want to make sure I've got the ability to explain Christianity the best I can to somebody who has no idea or has misconceptions. There have been so many who have not done that in the right way; I'm not saying we're doing it the right way, but people have all these misconceptions, it gets like ... man, it's up to God. He's the one in control. But I just want to make sure that we're representing what true Christianity is to the world."

Though many are discovering *Sixpence None The Richer* for the first time, the fact remains that the record has been in stores for a while. After all, it was picked "Album Of 1997" by both *7ball* critics and readers.

But since those songs were written, the band members' lives have vastly changed: Slocum, Nash and Baker each have gotten married; the band has happily and fruitfully signed with Squint; there is a new lineup (longtimers Slocum, Nash and drummer Dale Baker are joined by bass player Justin Cary and rhythm guitarist Sean Kelly); and, of course, they are finally seeing their patience pay off in terms of breaking through to a larger audience.

Consequently, Sixpence has been hitting the studio every six weeks or so to document those changes. "Every record is an outpouring of all the stuff you've stored up, all the things that have affected you or you've listened to or anything that's influenced you. Hopefully on the next record you'll find more themes of joy and happiness," he says, adding that the sound of the record should also reflect many of the sonic discoveries the band has made in the intervening time, as well as the new personalities in the band. "We're so young and our lives are changing so rapidly it's nice to be an artist and be able to document that."

In the meantime, they're still playing songs that reflect a point in their lives that is over. "It's kind of annoying sometimes," Slocum says. "I guess every artist encounters that dilemma: You make this record; it takes two or three years to get the public to notice; once they do notice, you've got to do it for another long period of time so they can become familiar with your name."

By the time a band gets to the place where they can do another record, their lives are totally different. "I always want to rush on to the next record so I can talk about new things and new experiences," Slocum says. "But our career is just getting started, so it's kinda hard to do that right now." 7

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Switching Gears

The new-sound Switchfoot on Kierkegaard, company cars and a new way to be human

By Amy E. Dixon

"I realize we have a voice," suggests Jonathan Foreman, songwriter and young frontman of three-piece Switchfoot. "Now, what are we going to say?"

A lot of bands in the Christian market begin to steer away from overtly Christian themes as their careers move ahead. But Switchfoot's Jonathan Foreman, Tim Foreman and Chad Butler want to take responsibility for their audience by encouraging greater knowledge of Christ through their second album, *A New Way To Be Human*. "For good writers, your audience should play a big part in what you write," Foreman says. "We've really been trying to find our niche. Where do we fit in the body of Christ? Where do we fit in the music scene? In San Diego? In the world?"

The growth that accompanies trying to find your own voice has resulted in an album that deals heavily with the hope of redemption. "I wanted to emphasize hope, not living in all of my mistakes," he says. "To live in that hope is much more important than eloquently describing the pain. That makes the hope make much more sense, but I think the hope has to be mentioned."

The biggest departure for Switchfoot musically was from the rock "three-piece put-em-in-a-room-and-let-em-go sound." As Foreman explains, "The first album we only had three weeks to do everything, and then we had to go back to school. Play the drums. Play the guitar. Sing. OK, it's finished!"

This time around they had the time to experiment and make the album they really wanted to create. "A lot of these songs I demoed at home with a VS-880 hard disk recording device that's really cool to mess around with and get crazy weird sounds," Foreman says. "A lot of those sounds were used on the album."

Switchfoot's touring schedule after *The Legend of Chin* was sporadic, but just enough to hone their tastes for road life and draw out their competitive spirit for live performances. "My favorite band we toured with was Five Iron Frenzy because I really believe in who they are and I really believe in their music," Foreman says. "I get inspired by their chord progressions. After the tour I kept getting 'Every New Day' stuck in my head, so it was hard not to write songs that didn't have that chord progression: Da-Da-Da Da-Da! Switchfoot almost became a ska band."

"Power pop" is a more likely description, perhaps in reflection of the strength they are mustering up to make their musical efforts count. "We took the band seriously [before], but we didn't really understand what we had been given," Foreman says. "Everything had just kind of been handed to us."

As fairy tales go, Switchfoot was still nameless when

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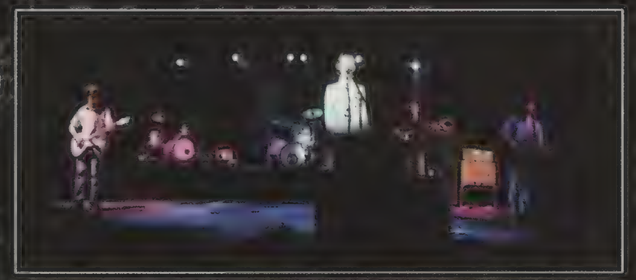

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producer extraordinaire Charlie Peacock mysteriously ended up with their demo in the fall of 1996. The bank inked a deal and recorded *The Legend of Chin* during Christmas break of that year.

"Now with this album, and with the next year, we're taking it as a 9 to 5 job. We're going to practice a lot and try to make ourselves the best band that we can be, which seems so normal and natural, but unless you put some thought into it and really go for it, you're not pursuing it."

A New Way To Be Human reveals much pursuit, as does a regular conversation with Foreman. He is an avid reader and thinker whose lyrics reflect the philosophies, prayers, observations

and personalities that affect him most. Songs like the quiet "October 21 (Let That Be Enough)" reveal a healthy dose of weakness and dependence felt by a 22-year-old, yet throughout *Human,* he shows a mature recognition that all is futile in the pursuit of a happy life.

"I think a lot of people are writing about society's inability to bring us what we need," he says. "It can bring us what we think we need, but it can't bring us what we really need. I look up to bands like Radiohead and Beck, and you can pretty much read that [idea] in a lot of their stuff.

"I've probably seen it and pursued it and seen that [way of thinking] doesn't do anything. And then probably done that again and again and again ... and continued to see the mirage and think, *Oh, yeah, well, if I get a new guitar then that'll be cool and I'll be happier.* Hopefully not too often, because that can get really expensive, you know?" he says with emphatic jest.

Not only does society's emphasis on "stuff" and selfish pursuits fill life up with empty meaning, it just fills up time and thoughts, leaving little room to search for actual personal ideas or God.

"It's so easy to become stagnant and feel like you're moving," he adds. "We could talk about the song 'Company Car.' *Hey this is who I've become, but I don't really have time to think about it, I just keep moving on.* That's just a terrible place to be. If you don't have time to stop and think about things, that's probably a bad sign," he says.

It's "dangerous" for Christians to not take time to pursue their faith intelligently, he asserts. "You can say you just believe in the Bible, but if you go to church you're [also] being fed what the pastor believes. Sometimes you need to look at the world around you and ask what other great thinkers have had to say through the centuries.

"First of all, I think it's sad that the church doesn't read and learn more about their history. Harvard and Yale are founded on the church. That's our heritage and to give that away is a sad thing. I think wisdom is something we should seek after.

"If you seek Him, He will be found by you," Foreman continues. "We can actively seek Him by reading what people have thought about the Bible. We can learn a lot from the past."

I look to find you/ Down on my knees/ Oh, God, I believe/ Please help me believe, Foreman sings over the emotionally charged acoustic groove of "Something More (Soren's Song)." "Soren Kierkegaard had a really healthy fear and trembling of God," he explains. "I think there's a mystery and a fear that's not in our church. I think a certain amount of respect and awe has to be around when you're thinking about God. I tried to write the song from [Kierkegaard's] perspective that through God we can become smaller, more humble. John the Baptist said, *I must decrease and He must increase.* That is a profound thing and what does that mean?"

Foreman's thirst to establish strong groundwork for his faith comes from the simple idea of wanting to know God better—so he can encourage other young people to ask questions and do the same. "I'm really trying to learn how to have Him be what I'm about every second of the day," he says. "That's what 'Under the Floor' is about. His presence is everywhere around me. He is bringing His kingdom to me. And instead of thinking of God as being off in a box called Heaven, He is the One who holds the molecule together. How much closer could He be?" 7

CHEVELLE

bankshots

The members of Chevelle started playing Chicago's premier music clubs before they were old enough to enter as customers. Brothers Sam (drums), Pete (vocals/guitar) and Joe (bass) Loeffler of the Tool-influenced hard rock band are now 24, 22 and 18, respectively, but Joe was a mere 14 when they first played notable venues.

"We used to practice in my bedroom, and then we went from my bedroom to playing in an unfinished basement in our parents' house," Sam says. "As far as moving from that to a club scene, it's just a matter of having something to send out and discovering somebody that likes it."

"They are one of the tightest bands I've seen," remarks Nate Sjogren of The Insyderz. "We were setting up a tour with Fold Zandura and wanted to take an opening band that would be really cutting edge, so we called Chevelle. They had no label, nothing. I called Steve Taylor [The Insyderz were signed to Taylor's Squint Entertainment at the time] and said, *Hey, we've got this really rippin' band with us and you should come check 'em out.*"

Taylor says that four from the label went to check out Chevelle. "Thirty seconds into their first song—I'm not exaggerating—I turned to the others and yelled out, *We've got to sign this band!*" he recalls.

With the launch of Chevelle's national debut, *Point #1*, recorded and mixed by Steve Albini (Nirvana, Bush), the band has its eyes on the mainstream. "We've felt like we need to be where the most people are listening," Sam says. "You know, we grew up with bands like Nirvana; it would have been great to have an album already there in your arsenal of music and then later on find out that these guys are Christians and that it's possible to live in the world without having it take you over.

"Our vibes will be different. Our vibes are the witness more so than the music. Whenever our Christianity comes out, it's through personal [means]— people coming up and talking to us after shows and things."

—Nancy VanArendonk

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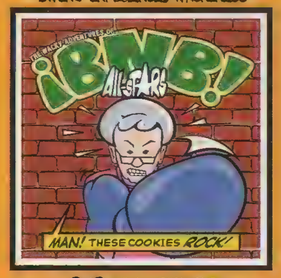

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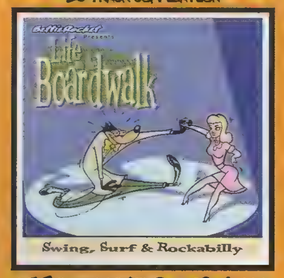

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Morella's Forest

Sydney is equivocating. The quiet-at-times female vocalist of Dayton, Ohio's Morella's Forest is trying to be careful when describing her influences; she doesn't want to be tagged as sounding too much like another artist. "I don't try to sound like anybody else," she says. "I know there are voices in my head from things I've listened to a lot, but I can't name just one or two."

"How about Veronica or Betty," I ask, figuring if I'm not going to get a real answer, we might take a clue from the cover art for the band's third CD, *From Dayton With Love*, and go with cartoons. You know, Veronica and Betty, from the Archies?

"That's great," she laughs. "Let's go with that."

Frankly, the less said of the cover art the better, Sydney says. When the cover was conceived by the same designer who did their previous cover, it seemed like a good idea. But since the album hit racks, out came the new ad campaign for Levi's Silver Tab jeans, labeled Kizmet Rising.

"We were like, *Oh, no,*" she says. "Our cover's done by a local artist; we've really liked his work. None of us had seen the ad campaign, so we're hoping nothing comes of it."

She's more excited talking about the music on *From Dayton With Love*. "We're still experimenting a little bit," she says. "We grow a little bit with each album, hopefully. On the new album, it's more electronic, with more keyboards, but I don't really know what the next one will sound like."

As the band's principle lyricist, Sydney writes about the little things in life. "I respect a lot of what goes on in daily life. A lot of it is seeing how everybody interacts with each other; sometimes it's funny, other times it's sad.

"I try to think about how Jesus looks at things and feels; I try to think like Him as much as I can, to stay in that mindset," she says. "I know I can never be like Him entirely, but I want to do the best I can."

—Brian Q. Newcomb

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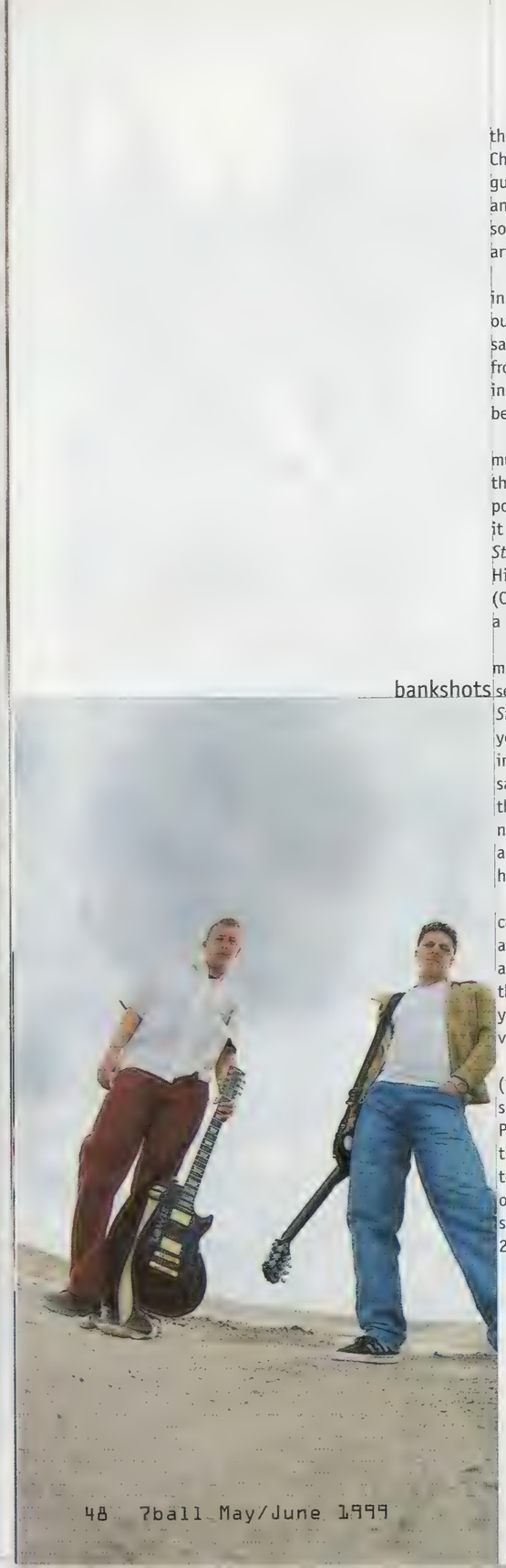

GLISTEN

The guys in Glisten don't beat around the bush. "We want to be a light for Christ," announces lead vocalist and guitarist Jason Pettit. "We don't want any ambiguity ... we want to write songs with blatant lyrics and be as artistic as possible in the process."

The band formed about five years ago in Fort Worth, Texas. "When we started, our influences were more metal," Pettit says. "We have definitely moved away from that; it is real difficult to describe in a couple of words what the music has become."

Those who have tried to describe the music say Glisten has more in common these days with the dreamier modern pop of Radiohead or The Cure. In fact, it makes perfect sense that their debut, *Starlight Wishlist,* was produced by Steve Hindalong (The Choir) and Marc Byrd (Common Children), both of whom know a bit about dreamy modern pop.

Glisten was discovered by Christian modern rock legend Terry Taylor, who served as executive producer for *Starlight Wishlist.* "I wanted to sign young talent that was not trying to imitate their musical heroes," Taylor says. "Glisten struck me immediately as the group I was looking for. These guys not only have what it takes to pull off a great debut, they have an authentic heart for ministry."

The band clearly demonstrates a capacity to deal with hooks, melody and groove. "We like to write melodies and counter melodies that intertwine themselves," Pettit says. "Sometimes you might follow a bass line, then a vocal line, then perhaps a guitar line."

Their songs range from the allegorical ("Mothership") to straight-ahead worship ("Rejoice"). But through it all, Pettit says, they want to make sure they keep listeners interested. "We like to write and record our music so someone listening to our album can hear something they didn't hear the previous 20 times they listened."

—Tammi Brooks

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Travis Wyrick loves producers—in fact, much of his CD collection he bought because of the producer, not the artist. "I go out and buy Lenny Kravitz because I want to listen to it," he says. "But I go out and buy Garbage because of the production."

Of course, this may have a bit to do with the fact that Wyrick—who can be heard on his own industrial pop album, *Mental Floss*—is a producer himself. "With the production side of it, oh gosh, you create."

You can hear the excitement in his voice growing as he continues: "A band walks in the door and you really don't know what they're gonna sound like. You start to hear someone and you think, *Wow, let me pull 'em this way*. When it's all said and done, it's cool or it's not," he chuckles. "But I enjoy that challenge."

But all this working on the music of others led Wyrick to miss creating his *own* work. "You know what? I hear this stuff in my head. Instead of trying to get someone to do it, I'm just gonna do it. I just wanted to try and put this whole thing together and see what happens."

In creating *Mental Floss,* Wyrick found his playing field wide open. "That was the beauty of it—since there wasn't a band, there were no boundaries. If I wanted to play kazoo and xylophone, I could; it was a great opportunity to do whatever I felt like."

The end result, reminiscent of Filter, strikes a healthy balance between the mechanical and the organic. "There's a lot of real guitar, real bass and, of course, real vocals," he says. "But there is a lot of programming and loops, too."

Wyrick also has a firm belief in *where* these songs came from. "I feel those songs are gifts from God. I just hope that when it comes time, He's gonna give me some stuff again. If He wants to take it a step this way or a step that way, y'know, I'm just gonna let Him do whatever He wants to do."

—Thom Gladhill

Wyrick

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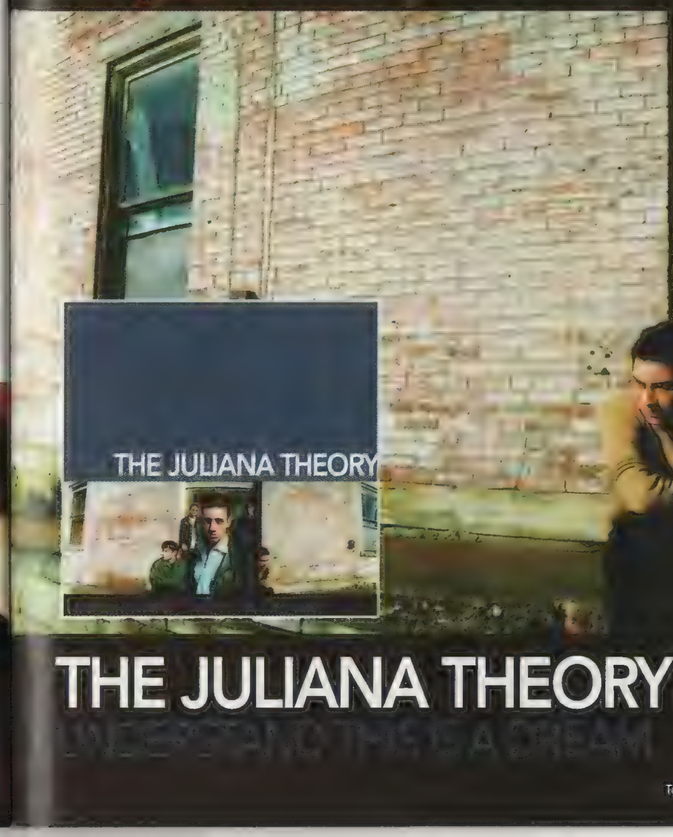

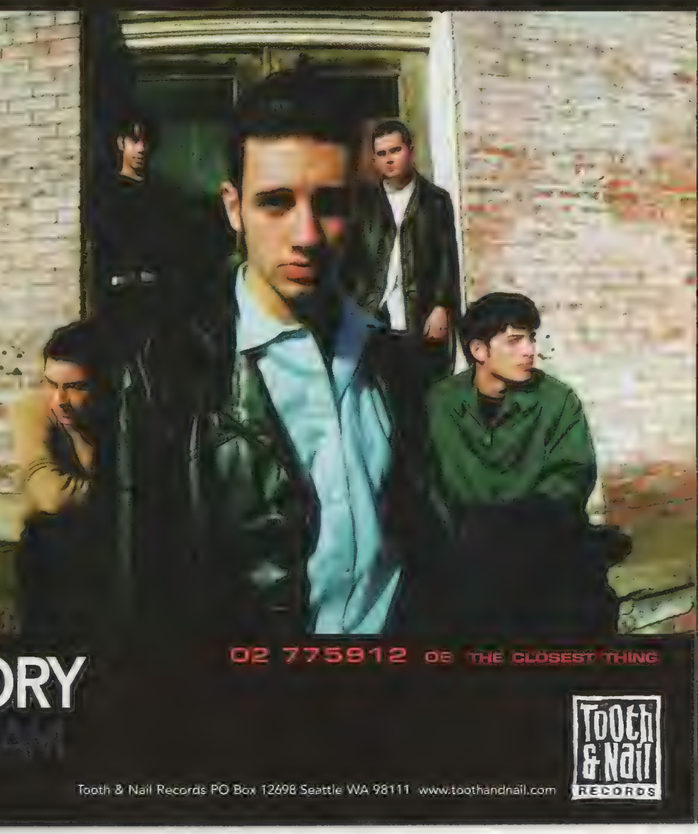

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13. **BALLYDOWSE** "Sails" GRRR Records 4:19
(written by Ballydowse) © 1998 GRRR Records

When the Christian punk band Crashdog began a sabbatical last year, vocalist Andrew Mandell and bassist Brian Grover teamed up with fellow Jesus People USA members to form a new band. Mingling a diverse mixture of musical influences, Ballydowse woos the spirit with haunting Celtic sounds embedded in driving rock rhythms while challenging the heart with thought-provoking lyrics. *The Land, The Bread, And The People* (GRRR) is unlike anything you've heard before.

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14. **THE IVY LEAGUE** "Easy As One" (unsigned) 3:12
(written by The Ivy League) © 1999 The Ivy League

"Easy As One" is the first single from The Ivy League's newest indie project, *The Price is OK*. Described by one magazine as "the next big ska band," The Ivy League debuted at many summer '98 festivals, including Cornerstone and Tomfest. To find out more about this up-and-coming band, go to their website at *www.theivyleague.com* or email *TheIvyLeague@juno.com*.

15. **THOUSAND FOOT KRUTCH** "Rhyme Animal" (unsigned) 5:10
(written by Thousand Foot Krutch) © 1998 Thousand Foot Krutch

Thousand Foot Krutch is a Canadian-based band that mixes several styles of music, including punk and rapcore. Their first album, *That's What People Do*, has been selling well wherever they play. To learn more about the band, call (705) 740-1063 or email them at *thousandfoot@hotmail.com*.

GAS COLLECTION VOLUME 13

1. **SIXPENCE NONE THE RICHER** "I Can't Catch You" Squint Entertainment 4:13
(written by M. Slocum) © 1997 Squint Songs/ My So-Called Music (ASCAP)

While the songs on their self-titled album are written from the trials of the three band members, they could be about the experiences of anyone who wrestles through the night with fear and despair. Under the direction of producer Steve Taylor, Sixpence downsized their band and began to experiment with more subtle and intricate arrangements for their first recording with Squint Entertainment. Today, the members of Sixpence are gaining popularity and fans as their music is heard on television and movie soundtracks.

2. **LA SYMPHONY** "San Diego" Eartube Empire 5:51
(written by B. Bordas, J. Dunkin) © 1999 Jumbug Droppings/ Electric Beehive/ Mic Rocker Music (ASCAP)

Every year one hip-hop entity explodes from the vibrant underground of Los Angeles to take the world by storm. LA Symphony is a collection of nine MCs and one DJ who embody the creativity and diversity of Los Angeles. Hip-Hop, humor and endless energy combine for a crowd-pleasing experience on *Compostion No. 1*. (Eartube).

3. **BUCH** "Why Won't Josh Dance" Tattoo Records 3:13
(written by D. Reynolds, A. Brown, J. Wheeler, M. Fahlstrom, R. Jacoby) © 1999 New Spring Publishing, Inc. (ASCAP)/ Bridge Building Music, Inc. (BMI)/ Brentwood Benson Music Publishing, Inc.

Buck band members are never caught anywhere without their hockey gear, and everywhere they go, they seek to live up to the acronymn from which they take their name—Building Up Christ's Kingdom. Their self-titled 10-song project from Tattoo Records features high-energy tunes and covers a wide range of styles from

GAS COLLECTION CD VOLUME 12

8. TAI-DANIELSON "Idiot Boksen" Tooth & Nail Records 2:21
(written by Danielson Family) © 1999 New Jerusalem Music (ASCAP)
Initially, Danielson was a family group with the oldest brother, Daniel, providing songs that were complexly structured and solidified by the group's spontaneous interpretations. Today, Danielson has grown branches—the acoustic, hand-clapping gospel of the Danielson Famille, the dark stadium-scout-choir from Danielsonship and the bare sing-along songs of Brother Danielson. *Omega* (Tooth & Nail) is the continuation of last year's *Alpha*.

9. THE KREEPDOWNS "Go Now" Bettie Rocket Records 3:04
(written by M. Misiuk, The Kreepdowns) © 1998 Spruce Top (ASCAP)
The Kreepdowns blend breathy melodies, dreamy, languid soundscapes and simmering feedback with the swirling distorted guitars of Smashing Pumpkins and the independent energy of the Pistols and Ramones. On their debut album, *Take A Spin* (Bettie Rocket), the band defines their emotive sound and creativity within the context of pop song writing.

10. L.G. WISE "Time Like Dis" Grapetree Records 4:03
(written by M. Collins) © 1998 Grapetree Records GT Publishing (BMI)
At age 11, Marvel Levette Collins was adopted by gang members as sort of a little brother and got into the whole scene—robbing, stealing and dope dealing. Today, after coming face to face with Jesus while attending church in Florida, L. G. Wise uses music to reach gangstas like he once was. He is on his way with his first album, *G'z Us 4 Life* (Grapetree).

11. MASSIHWOD "Brightblur" Tattoo Records 5:13
(written by W. Shaw) © 1998 New Spring Publishing, Inc. (ASCAP)
Fans of the intense sound of bands from Smashing Pumpkins to Nine Inch Nails and Garbage will find a musical affinity for Massivivid, as well as a couple of dramatic divergences. You can loosely draw a line through the band's diverse influences as far back as the early '80s. *Brightblur* is available from Tattoo Records.

12. B.O.B. "Mission Trip To Mexico" KMG Records 2:38
(written by B. Sied) © 1999 Broken Songs (ASCAP)
third-wave ska to roaring 20's swing.

4. MORELLA'S FOREST "Water's Overhead" Tooth & Nail Records 3:30
(written by Morella's Forest) © 1998 Spinning Audio Vortex, Inc. (BMI)
Characterized by simple, sweet melodies that are rounded out by equal parts of noisy guitar lines, candy pop and new wave quirkiness, Morella's Forest is from the indie rock hub of Dayton, Ohio. With their newest release, *From Dayton With Love* (Tooth & Nail), the band continues to develop their skills with the addition of the keyboards which complement their power pop guitars and fat bass lines.

5. WYRICK "Supernatural" Rugged Records 3:25
(written by T. Wyrick) © 1998 Musicanation (BMI)
After eight years in a secular band Travis Wyrick became a Christian and left his group. Now a producer for Rugged Records, Wyrick is venturing to create his own music using a unique combination of live instruments and synthesized sound. His latest album is *Mental Floss* (Rugged).

6. E-ROC "Shotgunz & Scriptures" Grapetree Records 4:12
(written by E. Fitzgerald) © 1998 Smokehouse Music (BMI)/GT Publishing
During the 1990 American Music Awards E-roc was on stage as Vanilla Ice's top dancer, yet even after success like that he felt there was something missing in his life. It was then E-roc rededicated his life to serving Christ through music. His newest album, *The Return*, is available from Grapetree.

7. THE JULIANA THEORY "Musicbox Superhero" Tooth & Nail Records 4:27
(written by B. Dietz, C. Nonticue, J. Fiedler, N. Heinrank) © 1999 We Own Your Songs Inc (SESAC)/ No You Don't, We Own Them (SESAC)
The Juliana Theory began as a last ditch effort to help scientists in Pennsylvania prove a theory. The catch is the band is restricted from telling anyone the theory, so the band must show the ideas through their pop music and lyrics. Try to figure it out yourself on *Understand This Is A Dream* (Tooth & Nail).

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EDL

Moment of Clarity

KMG

In 1996, EDL emerged as a contender in Christian rapcore with their sophomore *American Standard*. The album secured EDL a solid fanbase with its pop-influenced touch, but both the market and EDL were ready for a heavier, more underground sound when it came time for a third project.

Produced by Eric Stenman of Tinfed, *Moment of Clarity* takes EDL deeper into the rapcore scene with energized hip-hop vocals floating over heavy, angry guitars and rhythms. Several songs are geared less toward radio and more toward genuine rapcore, with hard/soft tempo changes, angry vocal inflections, and violent, pent-up bursts of energy. Other songs, such as "Never Fails," actually have a shot at mainstream alternative radio domination.

Tedd Cookerly's vocal and rap performances are stellar on *Moment of Clarity*. He still screams at times, but most of his vocals feature a crisper, more enunciated rap flow. The closest musical comparison would be Limp Bizkit, though some songs, like "The Choice is Yours" and "Wrecking Ball," resemble straight hip-hop a la House of Pain. With "Time to Change," Cookerly even does some actual singing, nicely breaking up any hint of monotony.

Most importantly, Cookerly's much-improved style helps separate EDL from the overplayed barrage of rapcore frontmen trying to imitate vocalists like Rage Against the Machine's Zach de la Rocha or Korn's Jonathan Davis. The new album also benefits from the excellent guitar tones and heavy crunch delivered by guitarist Carl Weaver and a solid, forceful beat laid down by Eric Wilkins. *Moment of Clarity* also benefits from the fresh perspective of new bassist Jeff Elbel (Farewell to Juliet, LSU), who offers a well-placed melodic sensibility in addition to holding down the low end.

KMG, label home to EDL, recently made a weaker stab at rapcore with the band American Made; don't judge EDL by their labelmate's shortcomings. EDL makes up for them with a solid album which serious rapcore fans and musicians will respect and admire. Without question, *Moment of Clarity* has the potential to help EDL break out hugely in the rapcore scene. Regardless, EDL's genuine rapcore sound stands to influence the entire Christian hardcore scene while making substantial waves in the general market underground.

—David Jenison

Review

Tri-Danielson

Omega

Tooth & Nail

There's a long, mysterious chord of weirdness that runs through the history of rock 'n' roll. Of course, much that was weird in the old days was just ahead of its time—the weird genius of Frank Zappa, Captain Beefheart, most of Todd Rundgren, early David Bowie, etc. But each artist made real contributions to the growth and evolution of rock music.

Of course, then there's the off-kilter stranger in a strange land whose work may find an audience here and there, but often is rightfully ignored by the mainstream. Such an artist—or family of artists—is Tri-Danielson. *Omega*, this year's completion to last year's *Alpha* collection, is quirky, unusual and strangely humorous.

There's Daniel's annoying falsetto, his hackneyed compositions, the music's unusual reliance on old synth and keyboard sounds and unusual rhythms, all of which never quite work at an aesthetic level. When the music is most accessible, as in the acoustic guitar-driven pieces, often his voice is distracting and grating.

"Interesting" is a nice way to put it. When something does work, that's the last time you'll hear it; yet, awkward, disorienting sounds like those of "Guilt Scouting" are assuredly repeated. Tri-Danielson is to Christian rock what Howard Finster is to the world of painting. Which is to say, Picasso he's not. Yeah, interesting.

—Brian Q. Newcomb

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Caedmon's Call
40 Acres
Essential

The eyes of Rich Mullins peek out from behind the songwriting of Derek Webb and Aaron Tate, Caedmon's Call's chief lyricists—not a surprise considering Mullins' well-known influence on the band. Their attention to detail and love of metaphor, coupled with the bold acoustic guitars and pop smarts that have become Caedmon's Call's musical trademark, makes *40 Acres* an enjoyable piece of rock 'n' roll.

The Caedmon's Call sound has evolved from the simple, gutsy folk rock of their 1997 eponymous release to muscular guitar pop. On *40 Acres*, the band ties a thick knot of crispy rhythms, gently yearning acoustic guitars and sweetly spoken testaments to God's faith. Simply put, the band strikes the balance between their past work and their inner jam band self, a side of them which has always shown onstage but not always on record.

As on the last album, lead vocals are shared by Derek Webb and spouses Cliff and Danielle Young. While the latter two's vocal presence is strong enough to carry an entire album, it is Webb who steals the show. His sinewy voice glitters with a hint of a country twang and a raspy undercurrent that makes it quite distinctive.

The majority of *40 Acres* is surprisingly rooted in Southern rock, whether it's the Black Crowes-swagger of "Daring Daylight Escape," or the Gin Blossoms-styled power pop of the lead-off single "There You Go." Even when these touches are subtler, such as the delicately plucked banjo that worms its way into the shuffling "Faith My Eyes," the results are warm, but unblushing, just like Webb and Tate's songwriting.

Shiny threads of organ, earthy percussion and strings bring depth to such songs as the show-stopping ballad "Somewhere North," about a quickly-unraveling relationship. Webb turns in a beautifully affecting performance, a first-person account of heartbreak that resonates like a grand piano. Toward the end, where Webb admits *I may never find the sleep ... I've lost all feeling in my hands*, the listener is sucked in, making it an emotional highlight.

All things considered, *40 Acres* is a pleasant, cohesive effort, one that certainly casts quite a shadow over the majority of bland acoustic rock that seems bred for radio. *40 Acres* has heart, about as much heart as some of Mullins' greatest work.

—Derek D. Walker

Tragedy Ann
One Nation Under God
Organic Records

Tragedy Ann's follow-up to last year's surprise hit, *Lesser*, is chock full of its own surprises. For one thing, the whole tone of *One Nation Under God* is less dark, less foreboding, less angry than *Lesser*. For another, the production values have shot through the roof.

This album rocks. No artificial flavors; no artificial colors; no kidding. This is standard, three-chord progression, double-kick drum, driving bass line, yell-into-the-microphone rock 'n' roll. With passionate wailings reminiscent of the late Jim Morrison, frontman/songwriter Mikee Bridges delivers an 11-song treatise on Christianity as seen through the eyes of the MTV generation. He decries the tendency of middle class Christians to judge people based on their appearance in "Preaching Lies," marvels at the faithfulness of a loving wife in "45" and struggles with the dichotomy of rock star hero worship and its value (or lack thereof) to the Kingdom of God.

I don't want to be a rock star/ but if I wasn't could I talk to you about Jesus? he asks in "Eugene." His answer: probably not. The album, like Bridges, is brash, opinionated and uncompromising. It challenges authority, acknowledges its own weaknesses and ultimately tones down the volume and focuses on worshipping God.

—Mike Parker

Review

Temple Yard
Temple Yard
Gotee Records

For all intents and purposes, Temple Yard is a new band; but seasoned Christian world beat fans will recognize the reggae roots of Christafari in this soulful blend of pop with the sounds of the Caribbean islands. Of course, the similarity is natural; Temple Yard is the entire Christafari crew minus only Mark Mohr. The remaining five players, led by Erik Sundin, continue exploring the connections between reggae, pop music and the Gospel message.

A sophisticated pop sheen, not unlike what you expect from UB40, emanates from tracks like "Tell Me," "By Your Side," "Give It Away" and "Speak the Truth." Never drifting too far from a smooth, polished sound, Sundin & Co. do get a little grittier on tracks like "Lion of Judah," "Wicked Stone" and "Freedom In Captivity." Generally, the vocals feel a little too high in the mix, forcing the fun dance rhythms into a rather subdued position, but that may be a matter of personal preference. Still, there's no denying the band's overall musicality. Taut rhythms, lite-funk grooves, smooth keyboard and horn runs (especially the jazzy solo by guest Kirk Whalum on "Give It Away") are fresh and effective.

Emphasizing a message that humanity is lost and captive apart from the liberating love of God in Jesus, Temple Yard manages to please musically while lifting spiritually. It's "Not Too Late" to feel the warm island vibe of pop music from the Caribbean.

—Brian Q. Newcomb

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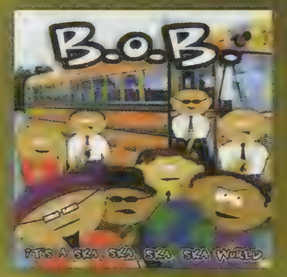

Bunch of Believers
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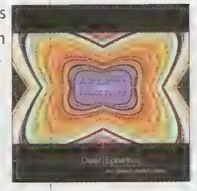
Dear Ephesus

The Absent Sounds Of Me

Bulletproof Records



Upon first hearing the wow and flutter of the atmospheric first track mesh with the urgently upbeat guitar barrage of "Looked For In The First Place," one is forced to realize this is a totally different Dear Ephesus. Taking on a more progressive sound with *The Absent Sounds of Me*, the band has chewed up and spit out the abundant impurities one may have heard on *The Consolation of Pianissimo*.

Aaron Wiederspahn gives a much-improved vocal performance over the debut, but is still able to maintain the underlying elements of passion and intensity he has become known for. He's one of the more expressive performers in modern rock, taking on a poetic lyrical style akin to the likes of Jeremy Enigk (Sunny Day Real Estate) and Chris Simpson (Mineral, The Gloria Record).

The diversity found on *Absent Sounds* makes the album sit squarely on the genre fence, defying labels and bordering several styles at one time. It is too cheerful to be emo, too pretty to be post-punk and too dynamic and intricate to be considered straight-up modern rock—yet it is all three of these, depending upon which song is playing. Each track can leave a different emotional taste in the listener's mouth; Dear Ephesus is clearly shooting for an innovative sound and, for the most part, is succeeding.

There are several strong references to chart-toppers like the Foo Fighters and even Third Eye Blind, but with *The Absent Sounds of Me*, Dear Ephesus shows they have enough credibility to avoid being just one more mediocre derivative of a tired radio trend. It's blue-collar, tearstained music that proudly wears its heart on its sleeve.

—Steve Tudor

Reviews

B.O.B.

It's A Ska, Ska, Ska, Ska World

KMG

B.O.B. (Bunch of Believers) is the best thing to happen to Christian ska since the Supertones, Five Iron Frenzy and The Insyderz—who are mentioned in the title track of *It's a Ska, Ska, Ska, Ska World*, the band's first album from KMG Records.

The horn section of the eight-member group is exceptional; add strong percussion and good guitar rhythms, and you have music that is tight and bouncy. Avoiding the ska rut, each song has a unique sound and feel, giving the 10-track album a lot of variety.

The group has two lead singers—Billybob Brown and Roberta Wyte—and it's interesting how the group transitions from male to female leads. The two share vocal duties on several cuts, including "I'm Gunna Wait," a song promoting chastity.

It's a Ska, Ska, Ska, Ska World also includes the no-nonsense "That's What I Believe," where they take a stand for Jesus; an enjoyable cover of the Newsboys' "Not Ashamed"; and "Mission Trip to Mexico," sure to become the anthem of youth groups across the country going on missions trip this summer. B.O.B. says in every song what it takes some pastors an entire sermon to preach. The group has a promising future in Christian music with this killer debut.

—Amy Sondova

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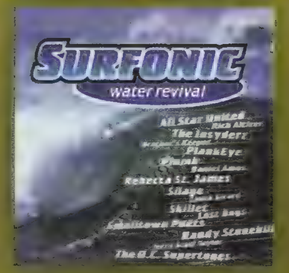

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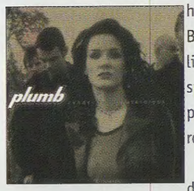


Plumb

candycoatedwaterdrops

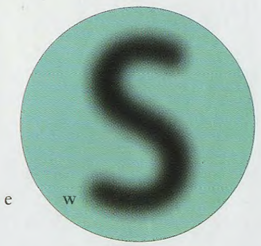
Essential

With its sophomore effort, Plumb portends to reveal an organic modern rock unit in the process of growth and self-definition. The five-piece band fronted by vocalist Tiffany Arbuckle has undergone two personnel changes since its debut, and through that has honed a smoothly crafted pop sound. But *candycoatedwaterdrops* sounds more like a singer/producer record shaped specifically with contemporary Christian pop tastes in mind rather than a modern rock band honing its own unique sound.

Written primarily by Arbuckle and producer Matt Bronleewe, with occasional support from other contributors, the tracks here exploit a Christian point of view, but often fail to share a genuine narrative or, for that matter, make a firm point. Three songs deal with issues around the relationships of singles: "World's Collide," "Stranded" and "Lie Low." Unlike the artists which Arbuckle is often compared to—Alanis Morissette, Jewel and Sarah McLachlan—she fails to share her own story in any intimate detail. Staying personally removed from the subject matter she ends up talking at the problem, not sharing in it.

She gets closer with "Damaged," a song about child sexual abuse, and "Solace." The strongest pop hook here is co-written with veteran Wayne Kirkpatrick, marking "God-shaped Hole" as a real hit. But, on the whole, *candycoatedwaterdrops* fails to connect at a deep artistic or musical level, which even the assistance of the London Symphony Orchestra fails to correct. More heart and earthy grit is called for, less sweetness and substance-less style. Album titles can be prophetic.

—Brian Q. Newcomb



Media Watch

Videos

The Tale of Two Videos

By Cameron Strang

VIDEOS

I got a new video camera and I like amusement parks; I guess I'll make a Tooth & Nail video compilation. At least, that's what I'm sure the high-ups at the label said when they decided to produce their fourth video montage, *The T&N Files*.

Now, don't get me wrong—the music videos on the project are great. The videos for BEC and Tooth & Nail artists like Plankeye, Joy Electric, Stavesacre and MxPx are surprisingly well-produced; and, if you haven't made it out to the summer festivals, they're a great opportunity to go *Oh, that's what the guys look like*. But the one group I was most looking forward to seeing—the bizarrely intriguing Tri-Danielson—was actually the one you saw the least. After being teased by a live concert introduction (in which Daniel is wearing a tree costume and the sisters are dressed as nurses), the actual, animated video for "Rubbernecker" kicks in. And while it *is* funny (sporting cardboard cut-out animation on the level of a less-refined, inbred cousin of *South Park*), it's the 30-second segment of live concert footage appearing after the video that, strangely, is most enjoyable (compelling the same way you just have to stare at a car wreck on the side of the road). Overall, though, the videos on the project are impressive. Several of the cuts (but not all of them, mind you) are quality enough to even find their way to MTV's *120 Minutes* or its Christian counterpart.

But it's the inane transition segments that stand out about *The T&N Files*. You'd think after all the money and effort put into making first-rate music videos, the crew would've put, oh say, 50 bucks into the other segments. But I guess the low quality, nauseatingly shaky filming and completely unscripted (and uninteresting) dialogue is the supposed charm, what makes it "cool" and "edgy." I say it's just boring. First, the label staff is walking around an amusement park; next, they're eating lunch; then, they're in an elevator. My 11-year-old brother makes Christmas videos more interesting. (But, then again, I guess my brother is a genius.)

On the other side of the alternative Christian video coin is the new project from apparel company Truth, called *The Moment of Truth 2: Take a Stand*. Instead of slapping music videos together with a few ad-libbed transition segments, the Truth video uniquely combines the worlds of Christian alternative music and extreme sports. I know—before you write it off as a cheesy bandwagon product (as I did initially), give it a chance. This thing is really well-made.

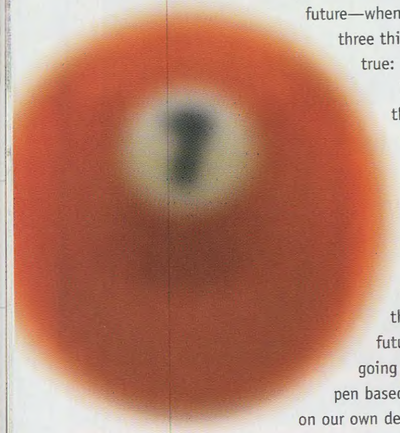
First, there is a plot woven through the whole video. We follow the story of five guys who buy a brown and orange-striped 1973 Chevodge (a Chevy camper with a Dodge backend) and head out in search of extreme sports.

The project comes complete with a narrator, fake commercials, actual footage of an impromptu SPAM-eating competition (with actual gagging) and cool music: you'll find Five Iron, Kosmos Express, Ghoti Hook and The Echoing Green, among others. I don't know where Truth got the sports footage, but it's actually impressive, better than anything seen on the X Games (although the best shots are still when they *don't* land right). If you're into any type of alternative sport, this video has something you'll dig.

But more than that, this video is different. The coolest thing about it isn't the sports or the music—it's when a couple of the athletes talk about what the Lord has done in their lives. As you're watching some of the most unreal BMX footage you've ever seen, the narrator says, "These guys live and ride for God. Years ago, their friends told them some of their moves couldn't be done—and their commitment to Christ was just a fad. They laughed ... and went on to prove them wrong."

At times the video makes you laugh. At times, you cringe because someone just bit it. At times, it's just powerful—and a great testament to being an individual, doing what you love and living sold out for God.

Whether you want **music**, a guy in a tree or lots of **SPAM**, this column has something for **you**.



Blah Blah Blah

By Mark Steele

We Americans are remarkably successful in predicting our own future—when one of three things is true:

1) When that future is what we want to happen.

2) When that future is going to happen based solely on our own decisions.

3) When that future is going to happen in the next three minutes.

We are, at the same time, very bad at predicting the future in the following three cases:

1) When we don't want it to happen.

2) When we have no control over it.

3) When we don't know when that future will take place.

Witness three recent demonstrations of our predictive inability:

1) President Clinton's acquittal

2) The Academy Awards

3) Krispy m&m's

Let's take the edible one first. By nature, I normally stay miles away from a new food product that is spelled incorrectly on purpose—the idea being that it must need a cute name to divert attention away from the fact that the snack is a member of the styrofoam family. But, in the case of the m&m, I allow a tinge of leniency. They have a good track record: They are, indeed, chocolate; they are small and, therefore, guiltless; and they have never reneged on their promise to melt outside of my hand. I can risk a clever spelling with m&m's.

FUTURE PREDICTION #1:
m&m's plus rice krispies equals fun.

This is a fairly simple prediction to make. Two good products make one great product, right? Wrong. No one guessed that Krispy m&m's would be a failure, but there it is, right in front of us. Tons of unpurchased blue bags: each one filled with a family of chocolate-rice rocks that lack both Krispiness and any tendency toward m&mnity. My friends immediately alerted me to their (retroactive) brilliance and foresight.

"I knew it! I knew these things wouldn't work. I could tell just by tasting them. Rice was never meant to be with chocolate. They should be kept far away from one another. The Mars Corporation is probably realizing this moment their error in not consulting me before making their final decision."

Similarly: "I knew it would be *Shakespeare in Love*. *Saving Private Ryan* is so overrated. There were no aliens. I can't wait to see the next movie this Shakespeare guy writes."

"I knew the President would get off the hook. Why don't people just leave him alone? It's his life. It would make a great movie. With aliens."

We think the Krispy m&m's are pretty good until nobody else likes them.

We think *Saving Private Ryan* moved us and taught us why our grandfathers were so closed off to our grandmothers until everyone we know and their brother has seen the film. Until Gwyneth gets an Oscar.

We think someone in authority should never be allowed to lie in a courtroom until the media makes us feel like tight-lipped, anal-retentive jerks with no sense of adventure.

And somewhere in the timeline of a year, our own perceptions, opinions, and even beliefs are radically altered by public opinion. We become different moral animals due to the influence of the whole wide world. But, we forget something.

There will be a test later.

A test that will not consist of questions based on our perceptions of our favorite government leader, film or chocolate snack—in fact, not based on perceptions at all but, rather, reality. The reality of who we, the test-takers, are.

And as our belief system is daily swayed by everything from public opinion to the chastisement of the media to the preference of the individual sitting to our left, we find ourselves in a quagmire of moral question where very few of us know what we believe. Deep down. Beyond the influence of those surrounding us. What we really believe.

The problem is that the world leaders, film makers and candy designers of the future aren't going to come from the people who are influencing you. They are going to come from the you who is being influenced.

We dream of and pray for a better society. A world focused on God and His rules. A world of purity and clarity. But how will that happen? Perhaps it is time that we sit down in a quiet room and seal out any intrusive sound of our culture. Stand in the silence and ask ourselves: *What do I think?*

Perhaps, for the first time, the answer you hear back will be more than blah, blah, blah. 7

* IN THE NEXT 46 MINUTES 26 SECONDS:

A Humming Bird will flap it's wings 5,470 times
An average Human will shed 86,498 skin cells
A Queen Ant will lay 109 eggs
A Fly will regurgitate and reconsume its meal 6 times
Over 6,000 hot dogs will be eaten on the streets of New York City
An average roofer will drive 1,800 nails
147,000 people will read this same ad (ok maybe not that many)

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*CHECK YOUR ENCYCLOPEDIA TO SEE IF THESE FIGURES ARE CORRECT... WE DIDN'T.

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April/May/June 1999
Issue #7

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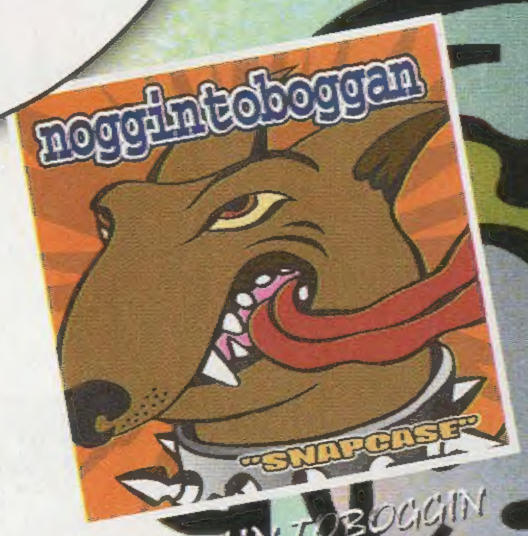
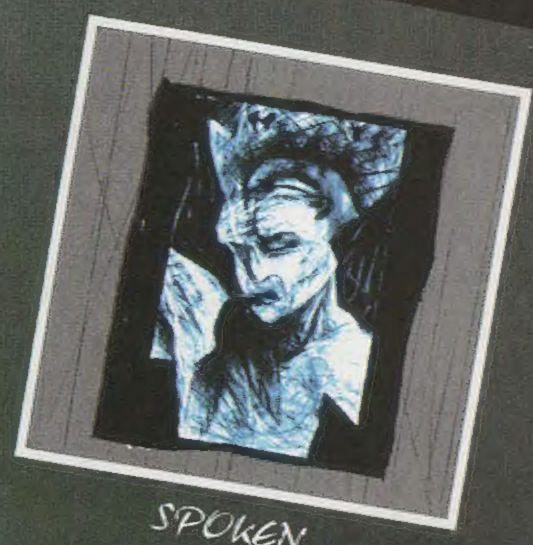
Extreme Music No Cheese

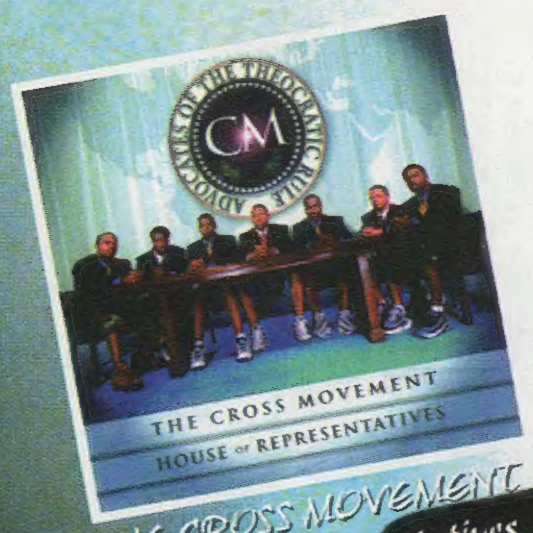


NOGGIN TOBOGGIN
Snapcase

K2S
Better Dayz



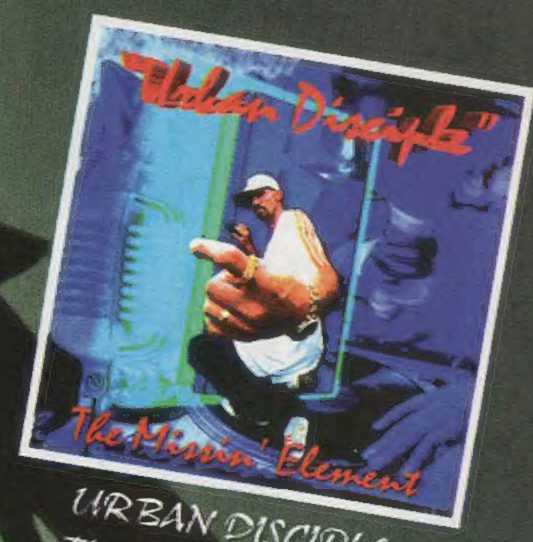
SPOKEN
...What Remains



THE CROSS MOVEMENT
House of Representatives

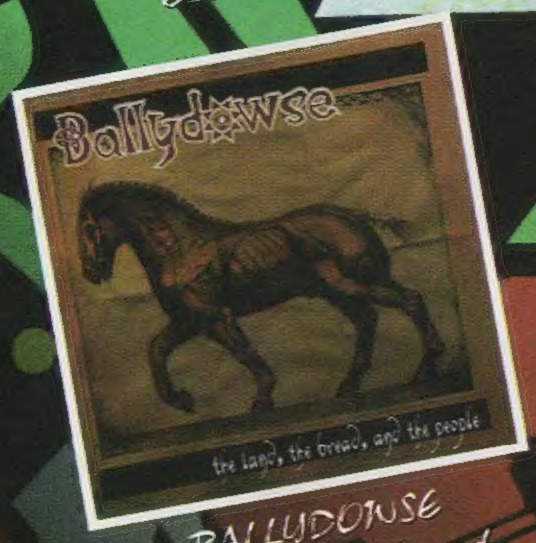
ROD LAYER
Essence of the Game

GODROCKET
Saved

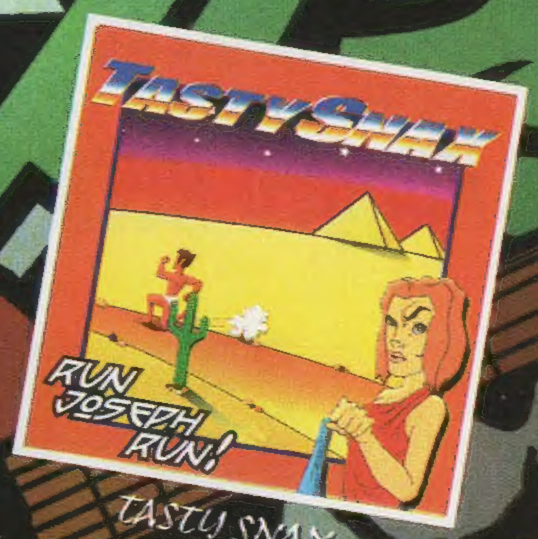


URBAN DISCIPLE
Tha Missin' Element

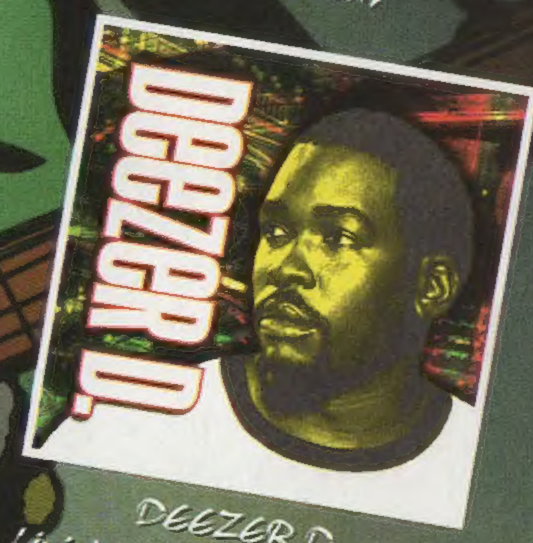
DIRT
(Representing Shadow of the Locust)
Plague



BALLYDOWSE
The Land, The Bread, and the People



TASTY SNAX
Run Joseph Run



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